

Experts: Measuring temperature by hand not accurate

By ASHLEY TANG

ashleytang@thestar.com.my

PETALING JAYA: As temperature checks are still required as part of the standard operating procedure (SOP) to enter any business premises, health experts warn that readings must still be from the forehead and not other parts of the body such as the hand or wrist.

Universiti Putra Malaysia epidemiologist Assoc Prof Dr Malina Osman said scanning equipment is meant to measure an individual's temperature on the forehead.

"Body temperature is usually read at three areas: the forehead, armpit and rectum (for infants).



Right way: A woman positioning her forehead at a scanner to get an accurate temperature reading.

"Measuring temperature on the hand is not accurate as it does not represent core body temperature," she said.

Universiti Malaya's Department of Social and Preventive Medicine Faculty of Medicine Prof Dr Moy Foong Ming concurred that temperature readings on the forehead are more accurate than on the wrist.

"Forehead temperature is also not accurate but it is better than the wrist.

"Temperature on the wrist is easily influenced by external factors or the environment," she said.

In August, Health director-general Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah stated that body temperature measurements should be taken on the forehead.

Dr Noor Hisham had said then

that an accurate body temperature reading is recorded when a thermometer is pointed at an individual's forehead, adding that an individual's temperature reading is inaccurate if it is pointed on other parts of the body, including the hand.

Malaysian Association of Public Health Physicians president Datuk Dr Zainal Ariffin Omar also said that it is the best and most accurate way to scan an individual's temperature on the forehead, rather than the wrist or hand.

"The wrist reading usually is less than the actual body temperature. So it's less accurate for checking someone's fever status," he said.