

'BETTER TO WAIT'

'Pregnant, breastfeeding women should defer taking vaccine'

KUALA LUMPUR: Pregnant and breastfeeding women are advised to defer taking the Covid-19 Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to avoid any possible side effect.

Universiti Putra Malaysia's Medical Microbiology lecturer Associate Professor Dr Niazlin Mohd Taib said this was because there was no clinical evidence to support the use of the vaccine for the group.

"Pregnant mothers should not take a live virus vaccine and the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is a messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA) vaccine that does not use the live virus.

"Although there should be no problem for pregnant and breastfeeding women to get the vaccine, since it is an mRNA vaccine, there is no clear data (on the use of the Covid-19 vaccine in pregnancy), including from Pfizer itself.

"It is better to wait first," she said on Bernama TV's *Koresponden* programme yesterday.

On allergic reactions that may arise from being vaccinated, she

said besides mRNA as its main active ingredient, the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine also contained inactive chemicals, including polyethylene glycol (PEG,) which may cause allergies.

Niazlin said: "PEG is commonly used in food preservatives and sometimes in skincare products.

"What's important is that you must inform health officers about your allergies before getting vaccinated."

For those who have perennial allergies, Niazlin said it was important to take precautionary measures prior to getting the vaccine, adding that medical personnel were ready to attend to any emergency.

At the same time, she said, those with a history of a severe allergic reaction to vaccines were not encouraged to take the vaccine.

She said that people with very low immunity, including those on chemotherapy, would be excluded from getting the vaccine.

Bernama



Soldiers placing the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine in ultra-cold freezers at Tuanku Mizan Military Hospital in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. PIC BY HAIRUL ANUAR RAHIM