

Letters

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VACCINATION

Parents' duty to protect kids' health

MEASURES must be taken by the relevant authorities and individuals to stop the spread of measles and other infectious diseases in the country.

This is important following the recent Health Department announcement on the increase in measles cases by 340 per cent with 873 reported cases, compared with the same period last year, when there were only 197 cases.

According to the World Health Organisation, measles, or also known as rubeola, is an acute childhood infection caused by the measles virus.

Measles is also a highly contagious infection.

Those infected will suffer respiratory problems and a rash.

It is highly contagious, spreading by air through droplets from the mouth, nose

or throat when an infected person speaks, coughs or sneezes.

Patients who fall sicker may develop medical complications.

Without proper treatment, some patients may develop pneumonia.

Most children in Malaysia are immunised since the implementation of the measles immunisation programme.

However, as of late, we are seeing a spike in new cases, especially in major cities, as a result of the influx of foreigners and immigrants.

Therefore, any child who is not vaccinated and exposed to others with the disease is at risk of being infected.

If no concrete steps are taken to stop the spread of measles, it has the potential to cause considerable morbidity, mortality and economic damage.

It is crucial to know that measles is preventable.

The measles vaccine included in the MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccination is recommended at 12 months old and, later, at 7 years old in Malaysia.

As such, parents play a vital role in ensuring that their children are immunised.

The authorities must conduct constant health checks on foreigners and immigrants in the country.

This is to ensure that no infectious diseases are being imported into Malaysia.

Individuals, too, play an important role.

They must immediately seek medical treatment when they realise that something may be wrong with their health or that of their family members.

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