



ADVISORY ON SARS

The Malaysian Government has taken precautionary measures a step further by freezing the intake of workers from SARS infected countries.

These precautionary measures are in addition to the WHO guidelines at every point of entry into the country to ensure the country remains free from SARS.

At every point of entry, passengers from any of the countries with SARS outbreaks – China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Canada and Vietnam – as identified by WHO, have to undergo thorough checks before they can go through immigration.

These precautionary measures are necessary to ensure the number of SARS cases is contained and to minimize the import of SARS cases.

All measures taken are a reflection of the Malaysian Government's decisive action to ensure Malaysia is a safe destination for tourists.

Immediately from March 17, the Health Ministry of Malaysia has disseminated information in the form of:

- Health alert card on SARS for people returning/coming from overseas, especially from SARS-affected countries at every entry point
- Health alert information in the form of frequently asked questions given to the public

- Advisory to doctors regarding SARS on what to do when confronted with a suspected case of SARS following WHO criteria for identification of SARS, and
- Travel advisory for travelers from Malaysia going to SARS-affected countries or cities.

All these are firm precautionary measures that the authorities have taken. In addition, the Malaysian Government has drawn up a plan of action which involves:

- Teachers monitoring students from kindergarten upwards for SARS symptoms
- Airlines screening passengers heading to Malaysia from affected countries
- Airlines disallowing anyone showing symptoms to board planes
- Airlines isolating any flight passengers with symptoms must notify these passengers to the destination airport
- The department of occupational safety and health giving health education to workers
- Freezing intake of foreign workers from affected countries

National carrier Malaysia Airlines has directed all cabin crew to carry on board the appropriate protective masks as stipulated by the Health Ministry. These masks will be provided to passengers who display flu-like symptoms.

Should passengers develop such symptoms on board, the airline will alert the destination airport so that appropriate medical provision is available upon touchdown.

It has also been recommended that passengers with flu-like symptoms and intending to travel should seek medical advice and be guided accordingly.

As at Press time, there has been only one case of probable SARS. The case has been categorized as “probable case imported from China”. There is presently no local case of SARS in Malaysia.

The Health Ministry has also designated hospitals for SARS to further ensure the disease contained. They are:

- Perlis : Kangar Hospital
- Kedah : Alor Star Hospital
- Penang : Penang Hospital
- Perak : Ipoh Hospital
- Selangor : Hospital Tengku Ampuan Rahimah, Klang and
Universiti Malaya Medical Centre, Kuala Lumpur
- Kuala Lumpur : Kuala Lumpur Hospital
- Negri Sembilan : Seremban Hospital
- Malacca : Malacca Hospital
- Johor : Hospital Sultanah Aminah, Johor Baru
- Pahang : Kuantan Hospital
- Terengganu : Kuala Terengganu Hospital
- Kelantan : Kota Baru Hospital
- Sarawak : Kuching, Sibuan and Miri Hospital
- Sabah : Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Kota Kinabalu and
Tawau Hospital

The Health Ministry has also urged the public to adhere to WHO’s travel advisory to postpone travel to the following areas: China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Vietnam and Canada.

It has also undertaken quick response to alert the public on SARS as well as its symptoms to heighten awareness.

Malaysia continues to welcome visitors from near and far. It is business as usual for Malaysia Truly Asia.

For more information call the Health Ministry of Malaysia at hotline 603-26946394/26938053 or visit the website on SARS <http://dph.gov.my/sars>.

Other information sources include <http://www.who.int/csr/en> and <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/index.htm>

ISSUED BY: Communications Division, Tourism Malaysia

DATE: April 7, 2003

For more info please call Hayati Hayatudin at tel 03-26935188

Or e-mail hayati@tourism.gov.my
