



TEMPORARY PAUSE OF ASTRAZENECA COVID-19 VACCINE

1. Ministry of Health would like to update the public on the situation regarding the Oxford-Astrazeneca Vaccine which has been rolled out in all vaccination sites as part of the National COVID-19 Vaccination Programme that commenced on April 3, 2021.
2. The COVID-19 Vaccine Technical Committee has noted reports from other countries of very rare cases of unusual blood clots associated with low numbers of platelets, in people vaccinated with AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine. A number of countries have reported this rare occurrence that appears to affect primarily younger individuals. So far, in the UK this adverse event has been reported in approximately 30 cases out of 27 million doses administered. This event can also occur naturally. At present, a number of international regulatory authorities including WHO and the European Medicines Agency (EMA) are of the view that the vaccine is safe and the benefits of the AstraZeneca vaccine outweigh the risks.
3. As of April 6, 2021 an estimated 2,323 individuals in Brunei Darussalam have received their first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine. **Alhamdulillah, active surveillance has not identified any event indicative of clotting disorders in those who have received the vaccine in Brunei Darussalam.**
4. Ministry of Health considers the safety of the vaccination programme as the highest priority. As such, the COVID-19 Vaccine Technical Committee will undertake further review of the available data to assure the safety of the AstraZeneca vaccine. While this review is ongoing, the Ministry of Health will **temporarily** pause the use of the AstraZeneca vaccine as part of its roll out. This is a precautionary measure until the Technical Committee has had a chance to complete this review and are able to make evidence-based recommendations on the use of the AstraZeneca vaccine. In the meantime, the vaccination programme will continue using the Sinopharm vaccine.
5. Members of the public who have recently been vaccinated with the AstraZeneca vaccine are advised not to panic or be alarmed. Ongoing monitoring of adverse events following immunisation (AEFI) will continue. Individuals who have received the AstraZeneca vaccine and subsequently develop shortness of breath, chest pain, leg swelling, persistent abdominal pain, severe or persistent headaches or blurred vision after vaccination, or who experiences skin bruising (petechia) beyond the site of vaccination after a few days, should seek prompt medical attention.

6. The Ministry of Health fully expects that this pause will be temporary pending completion of the review by the Technical Committee who will be guided by findings from international regulatory agencies. The Ministry of Health reassures the public that the pause is purely a precautionary measure and will update the public on the latest development on this issue. For any additional information, members of the public can visit the Ministry of Health's website at www.moh.gov.bn/SitePages/COVID-19.aspx or contact the Health Advice Line 148 (office hours)

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