

Najib jumps into vaccine debate fray

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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak today reminded parents to ensure that their children are immunised against diseases, and advised Muslim parents to disregard adverse news about immunisation.

He said parents who denied their children immunisation were subjecting them to risk and helping to revive communicable diseases already brought under control in the country.

Writing in his blog, *NajibRazak.com*, he said Muslim parents should not allow themselves to be influenced by news and rumours about immunisation and should give priority to the health of their children as responsible parents.

"Those who circulate such news and rumours by citing religion should stop doing so and not be presumptuous. Refer to those who know better," he said.

Najib's advice comes in the wake of the deaths of two children from diphtheria, one in Malacca last Tuesday and the other in Kedah yesterday.

The Health Ministry said the two children had not been immunised against the disease.

Expressing sadness over the deaths, Najib said Malaysia had long eradicated diphtheria and the disease could be easily prevented through immunisation.

"The Health Ministry's National Children's Immunisation Programme introduced more than 50 years ago and provided free is based on Islamic law on the concept of preservation of life," he said.

He said the immunisation programme had helped the government contain various types of communicable diseases.

"However, all that effort will become futile if there are some among us who spread news and rumours that cast doubts on vaccination or immunisation.

"Worse still, this false information is spread citing Islam and by Muslims themselves," he said.

- *Bernama*

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