

High-risk? Stay out of the haze

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Warning signs: A view of hazy conditions surrounding Putrajaya. Air pollution levels in the area were recorded at an unhealthy 156 yesterday, according to APIMS. — Bernama

KOTA KINABALU: People, especially those in the high-risk groups like children, the aged and the ill, must adopt precautionary measures with the ongoing hot spell and haze, says a public health specialist.

Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) deputy dean (research and innovation) for the Medical and Health Sciences Faculty Prof Dr Syed Sharizman Syed Abdul Rahim said haze affected the respiratory system, among other health risks.

He said tiny and dangerous molecules and toxic gases like sulfur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide were dangerous.

He said common effects involving respiratory issues were coughing, trouble breathing and nasal congestion.

Syed Sharizman said apart from the lungs, other parts of the body like the heart could be affected, with the skin being inflamed and eyes becoming dry.

“Those most at risk are children, the elderly and those with asthma or heart issues,” he said in a statement yesterday.

He advised pregnant women and those who worked outdoors to be extra careful as they were more likely to be exposed to polluted air.

Syed Sharizman urged the public to keep themselves informed of the latest Air Pollutant Index readings before carrying out outdoor activities and to wear masks when they are out and about.

He suggested that people reduce outdoor activities until the situation returned to normal.

He advised those with existing health issues to bring along their medicines and inhalers at all times, while those feeling ill should seek immediate medical attention.