

REPORT DISEASE AND HEALTH HAZARD NEWS OF INTEREST ALONG THE BORDER

March 21 - 27, 2024

PREVENTION IS THE BEST APPROACH FOR ZIKA

WEEKLY EVENTS

- The Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health, reported that from 2023-2024, there were 196 cases of Legionnaire's disease and 4 fatalities. The nationalities with the highest number of cases were, in descending order, England, followed by Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, and France. The most common locations where patients were found were hotels, followed by resorts, guesthouses, and apartments.
- On March 20, 2024, the Office of International Cooperation, Department of Disease Control, held a virtual meeting to discuss the implementation of the Thailand-Cambodia Public Health Cooperation Plan 2024. The objective was to monitor the progress and discuss the 2025-2027 work plan. The meeting resolved to improve and develop disease reporting programs to accommodate potential pandemics. It aimed to enhance the capacity of public health officials participating in the project by setting standards for selecting and expanding operational areas of the project, as well as improving the prevention and control of infectious diseases in hospitals. Additionally, it was decided to enhance the laboratory capacity of the Twin Hospitals.
- On March 28, 2024, the ASEAN EOC Network and the Emergency Medical and Public Health Operations Center of the Lao People's Democratic Republic reported 78 suspected cases of anthrax in Champasak and 11 cases in Salavan. There were no reported fatalities. Investigations to determine the cause of the disease and to trace contacts are ongoing. Relevant agencies have collected samples from both humans and animals for laboratory testing to confirm the occurrence of the disease.

Research conducted by the World Health Organization has found that changes in weather conditions, deforestation, and urban expansion are major causes for the spread of mosquito-borne viruses. These viruses tend to thrive in warm and humid climates, as well as in semi-tropical and tropical humid climates, and have seen a significant increase in recent decades. Diseases such as dengue fever, chikungunya fever, and Zika have become more prevalent during periods of changing weather conditions in Thailand, with localized flooding creating suitable breeding grounds for mosquitoes, which are the vectors for these diseases.

According to the Disease Control Department's surveillance report for the 12th week (March 18-24, 2024), three Zika cases of Zika were reported in Koh Phangan district, Surat Thani province. One of these cases involved a 25-year-old pregnant woman of Myanmar nationality who was 23 weeks pregnant. Investigations into the disease are ongoing.

From the Epidemiology Division of the Disease Control Department, it has been found that since the beginning of 2024 (January 1 - March 15), there have been a total of 112 reported Zika cases. It is known that this disease is not life-threatening and can resolve on its own within seven days. Treatment primarily involves symptom management. Pregnant women are considered a high-risk group, as infection during pregnancy can lead to severe complications. Babies born to mothers infected with the Zika virus may have brain and nervous system abnormalities, such as microcephaly, hearing loss, and delayed development. Therefore, pregnant women experiencing symptoms such as fever and rash should seek medical attention immediately. The best preventive measures include avoiding mosquito bites and controlling mosquitoes in the environment by continuously removing breeding sites to reduce the risk of Zika virus infection.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIALS

Local officials should coordinate with public health officials to inform residents about the current situation regarding the Zika outbreak in several provinces. They should disseminate information to raise awareness about the causes, symptoms, and basic self-protection measures against Zika virus infection. Although Zika virus is transmitted by mosquitoes, it may not be as severe as dengue fever and can resolve on its own. Pregnant women should exercise extra caution as it may lead to dangerous complications for the fetus. The best measure is to prevent mosquito bites by wearing long-sleeved clothes, applying mosquito repellent, sleeping under mosquito nets, and using mosquito repellent sprays or coils. Ensuring good ventilation in households and collaborating with relevant agencies to eliminate mosquito breeding grounds, both indoors and in public places such as schools, temples, and tourist accommodations, is crucial to reduce the risk of Zika for both residents and visitors alike.

INFORMATION COLLECTED AND ANALYZED BY


Multisectoral Capacity Development Program for Public Health Emergency Detection and Response in Border Areas

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