

REPORT DISEASE AND HEALTH HAZARD NEWS OF INTEREST ALONG THE BORDER

April 11 - 17, 2024

WEEKLY EVENTS

- The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) recently reported on civilian injuries and deaths from the unrest in Myanmar in 2023. As of April 4th, 1,052 civilian deaths have been confirmed, nearly three times the 390 deaths reported in 2022, with over 20% being children. The use of landmines and various munitions in the conflict has resulted in child fatalities. Currently, Myanmar ranks among the countries with the highest number of landmines and munitions. Children are at high risk because they cannot recognize the dangers of landmines, which can be found near homes, schools, playgrounds, and agricultural areas. UNICEF has assisted over 138,000 people in 2023 and is striving to raise funds to support children and families affected by these events.
- On April 16, 2023, the Ministry of Public Health reported on the road accident situation during the Songkran festival from April 11-15, 2024. There were 1,564 accidents, with 14,621 injuries, a slight decrease from 2023. Of these, 1,593 required hospital treatment, and 206 died, a 2% decrease from the previous year. The provinces with the highest fatalities were Bangkok and Chiang Rai, with 13 deaths each, followed by Roi Et with 12 deaths and Nakhon Ratchasima with 10 deaths. The risk factors contributing to accidents were speeding (41%), drinking alcohol (23%), and abrupt cutting in front of other vehicles (17%).

MEASLES: EARLY DETECTION CAN PREVENT SPREAD TO THE COMMUNITY

Bluedot Event Alerts reported that during the 2020-2021 COVID-19 pandemic, several regions worldwide observed decreased measles vaccinations. This has increased the global risk of measles outbreaks. The World Health Organization reported that from 2023 through the first quarter of 2024, the number of measles cases rose in all regions due to the relaxation of social distancing measures and unrestricted travel following the end of the COVID-19 pandemic. Over 60,000 measles cases have been reported in Europe and countries in other regions have recently reported cases including the People's Republic of China and Japan. In Japan, eight confirmed measles cases were reported in early March, with the first patient showing symptoms compatible with measles after returning from abroad. The disease investigation suggested possible measles transmission during air travel.

In Thailand, data from the Division of Epidemiology, Department of Disease Control, shows 514 measles cases from January 1 to April 7, 2024. In comparison, 230 and 356 cases were reported in 2022 and 2023, respectively. The Songkran festival in April, with its extended holidays, sees significant domestic and international travel, including people returning home, tourism, and social gatherings, which increase the risk of community measles outbreaks. Measles is highly contagious, spreading through droplets from an infected person's cough, mucus, and saliva, and entering the body through respiration. Observing symptoms early is crucial. Symptoms of measles include fever, runny nose, persistent dry cough, and red, watery eyes, followed by a high fever for 3-4 days and the appearance of red, raised, confluent rashes. Measles has no specific treatment; care is symptomatic. For suspected measles, it is essential to seek diagnosis from a doctor. Patients should be isolated and close contacts should monitor themselves. Health authorities should be notified to identify patients and contacts to prevent further spread of the disease.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIALS

Officials and village health volunteers should coordinate with public health officials to educate residents about measles, emphasizing the causes, symptoms, transmission, and prevention methods. This is especially important during the Songkran festival, a period with extended holidays when residents travel to various places both domestically and internationally and gather in large groups. Therefore, they should exercise caution and closely monitor their symptoms. If early symptoms of measles appear, they should see a doctor immediately. If diagnosed with measles, they should stop working or studying, avoid traveling to densely populated areas to reduce the spread of the disease, wear a mask, and avoid close contact with others.

As measles is a vaccine-preventable disease, relevant officials should promote vaccination, encouraging parents to have their young children vaccinated against measles, which requires two doses at 9 months and 18 months old. Vaccinations can be received at nearby public health facilities. Healthcare personnel should assess the vaccination coverage in the area and increase vaccination rates in the target group to at least 95% to prevent community outbreaks.

INFORMATION COLLECTED AND ANALYZED BY

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

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