

REPORT DISEASE AND HEALTH HAZARD NEWS OF INTEREST ALONG THE BORDER

May 23 - 29, 2024

WEEKLY EVENTS

- The Week 21 Surveillance Report (May 20-26, 2024), Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health reported a diphtheria outbreak involving two pre-school Laotian girls residing in Paktha City, Bokeo Province, Lao People's Democratic Republic. Previously, a sibling of the same age in the same household, had passed away with similar symptoms including fever, cough, sore throat, and white patches on the tonsils. The parents brought both girls with symptoms to Chiang Kham Hospital, Phayao Province, for treatment. Currently, one patient is under treatment while the other has unfortunately passed away. Both cases were diagnosed with diphtheria. Health authorities from both countries are currently collaborating to investigate the disease and monitor additional contacts, as well as coordinating efforts to address this issue together moving forward.
- Outbreaks of measles and whooping cough in the three southern border provinces of Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat have been reported. According to the measles elimination program by the Division of Epidemiology on May 20, 2024, there were 14 confirmed measles cases and 5 suspected cases. For whooping cough, there were 10 confirmed cases, 5 probable cases, and 17 suspected cases. These outbreaks are clustered, with 2-3 cases per household, found in children aged 6 months to 3 years who have no history of receiving basic vaccinations. The disease investigations are currently ongoing.
- On May 30, 2024, BlueDot Event Alerts reported the third case of avian influenza virus (H5N1) infection in Michigan, United States, confirmed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The latest patient is a farm worker in Michigan with a history of working closely with infected poultry and not using protective equipment during contact with them. The patient is currently receiving treatment and self-observing at home. There have been no suspected symptoms observed in household contacts or other farm workers and no indications of human-to-human transmission at this time.

PREVENTING COVID-19 OUTBREAKS IN SCHOOLS

The Week 21 Disease Surveillance Report (May 20-26, 2024) from the Department of Disease Control, identified COVID-19 outbreaks in several provinces including Buriram, Kanchanaburi, and Mukdahan. Over 200 cases were reported in these outbreaks. The number of incidents increased significantly in May 2024, coinciding with the start of the new school term. Thailand has relaxed some COVID-19 prevention measures to allow the public to return to normal life as much as possible.

The Department of Disease Control has prepared guidelines and recommendations for early childhood development centers, kindergartens, and primary schools to prepare teachers, caregivers, and parents for preventing COVID-19 and other respiratory infections that may occur during the school term. If children exhibit mild symptoms such as low-grade fever, cough, sneezing, stuffy or runny nose, and are still able to eat and remain cheerful, they should stay home, and parents should monitor and care for them until they recover. If symptoms worsen, such as high fever persisting for 2-3 days, rapid breathing, wheezing, refusal to drink fluids or eat, or decreased alertness, parents should promptly seek medical attention. In addition, parents are advised to use face masks, wash hands frequently, avoid close contact with others, consume a balanced diet, drink plenty of water, and get adequate rest. Furthermore, parents should diligently wash hands with soap and water before and after caring for sick children, and separate the child's personal items such as drinking glasses, toothbrushes, spoons, and hand towels. They should also avoid close contact with elderly household members who are at higher risk of developing complications. These measures are aimed at preventing the spread of COVID-19 in both schools and residential communities.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIALS

Local public health officials and school officials should conduct comprehensive public awareness campaigns targeting parents regarding the increasing outbreaks of COVID-19 in schools. Emphasis should be placed on proper hygiene practices, frequent handwashing, wearing face masks when in close proximity to others or in crowded places, and in areas with poor ventilation to prevent COVID-19 and respiratory infections that may occur during the school term. Therefore, relevant personnel, including parents, are urged to strictly follow the guidelines provided by the Department of Disease Control mentioned above. If households identify cluster cases in their communities or residential areas, they should immediately report to local public health officials to prevent the spread of these diseases.

INFORMATION COLLECTED AND ANALYZED BY

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

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