

# REPORT DISEASE AND HEALTH HAZARD NEWS OF INTEREST ALONG THE BORDER

May 30 - June 5, 2024

## WEEKLY EVENTS

- On May 31, 2024, the Inspector General of the Ministry of Public Health, Health District 2, visited the animal quarantine checkpoint in Tak Province, under the Department of Livestock Development, to consult on the management of rabies control in the border district areas of Tak Province. This included discussions on administering rabies vaccines to prevent rabies among relevant personnel before they come into contact with rabies-infected animals, aiming to mitigate the risk of rabies among staff in the area.
- From May 15-17, 2024, the Office of International Cooperation, Department of Disease Control conducted monitoring and follow-up activities under the "Neighbouring Country Development Project: Thailand - Cambodia" focusing on public health in three eastern provinces: Chanthaburi, Trat, and Sa Kaeo. These activities aimed to strengthen capacity building, which is crucial for development, and to support addressing challenges encountered in the area. Issues and obstacles in operations were identified, and collaborative efforts were made to exchange knowledge and develop strategies for joint problem-solving. Additionally, the operational plans for the year 2024 of the aforementioned provinces were reviewed.
- The Office of Disease Prevention and Control, Region 2, Phitsanulok Province, organized an operational meeting to drive forward the operations of the Cross-Border Disease Control Network along the Thailand-Myanmar border from April 30 to May 1. The meeting focused on addressing issues related to preventing and controlling malaria, enhancing disease immunity in children, and tackling border tuberculosis problems. Officials from the Ministry of Public Health's Health District 2 summarized key issues including resource allocation, leadership establishment, capable team formation, planning operations aligned with the current situation, and adapting operational plans accordingly. For the border tuberculosis issue, it was suggested to create a platform for presenting operational challenges and surveillance strategies in the area.

## MUSHROOMS CAN BE DANGEROUS. IF YOU DON'T KNOW, THEN DON'T EAT THEM

As Thailand enters the rainy season and still experiences occasional hot weather, the conditions are conducive to the growth of various types of mushrooms, especially wild mushrooms. These include both edible and poisonous varieties, which can be difficult to distinguish without sufficient expertise when gathering or purchasing for consumption. This poses a fatal risk.

In the Week 22 Disease Control Report (May 27 to June 2, 2024), there were two suspected clusters of food poisoning from mushroom consumption, involving a total of nine cases and resulting in one fatality, a 19-year-old male from Myanmar. The risk factors identified included mushroom picking in forested areas and coffee farms for consumption. Currently, investigations are ongoing. Recent news on June 5 reported incidents in Chaiyaphum and Loei provinces involving 8 and 5 cases of mushroom poisoning respectively, with a fatality in Loei province. Therefore, basic public awareness regarding the selection of mushrooms for consumption is crucial. For example, when picking wild mushrooms, it is important to select those with complete shapes and dig them up fully from the ground as some mushrooms may change appearance due to rain. Avoid picking mushrooms near chemical factories or roadsides, as mushrooms can absorb toxins and heavy metals. Mushrooms that have not been consumed before should be eaten in small amounts initially due to the risk of allergies.

Characteristics of poisonous mushrooms that should not be picked for food include brown-colored mushrooms, mushrooms with a ring underneath the cap, mushrooms with swollen bases, mushrooms with warts, mushrooms with white caps and holes instead of gills similar to fish fins, and mushrooms growing in or near animal dung. Importantly, mushrooms picked or consumed by those who are not familiar with them, especially those living near forests who often pick mushrooms for consumption, are often found to cause frequent outbreaks in such incidents. Nonetheless, if unsure whether a mushroom is poisonous or not, it should not be consumed outright. Moreover, certain toxins in some poisonous mushrooms are heat-resistant, making it impossible to destroy them even when thoroughly cooked. Initial symptoms when consuming poisonous mushrooms typically occur within 6-24 hours and include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain, and abdominal cramps. If left untreated for more than 24 hours, it can lead to liver or kidney failure and death.



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIALS

The Department of Education has notified public health officials to disseminate information about the dangers of consuming poisonous mushrooms, symptoms, and basic first aid. Communities should be informed how to distinguish between poisonous and edible mushrooms. If uncertain, unfamiliar, or suspicious about whether a mushroom is poisonous, it should not be used for cooking or consumption. For officials involved, it is essential to adhere to the principles of education, preparing for emergencies, and providing basic first aid as outlined in the "Poisonous Mushroom Handbook, 2023" published by the General Communicable Diseases Division, Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health.

Regarding toxicity testing of mushrooms, boiling poisonous mushrooms with rice or shallots will cause the rice or shallots to change color. Even dipping a silver spoon or silver chopsticks into the boiling mixture will turn black, indicating toxicity. However, this method cannot be applied to all types of poisonous mushrooms because some toxins are heat-resistant and cannot be destroyed even when thoroughly cooked. If symptoms indicate mushroom poisoning after consumption, seek medical attention immediately and bring a sample of the consumed mushrooms for proper diagnosis and treatment to reduce the risk of fatalities.

## INFORMATION COLLECTED AND ANALYZED BY

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

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Supported by the Thailand MOPH - US CDC Collaboration on Public Health

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## Sources

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