

# Department of Disease Control

## Weekly Disease Forecast No.217\_Influenza (30 June – 6 July 2019)

This year up to 25 June 2019, the Department of Disease Control reveals 180,235 influenza cases of which 14 had died. The overall number of cases is higher compared to last year.

Close monitoring had detected 98 influenza clusters. The outbreaks mostly occurred in the age group 25 – 34 years old in the central region of the country. Outbreaks were mostly found in schools, prisons, military camps, and hospitals respectively.

According to this week disease forecast, the occurrence of influenza is likely to increase during the rainy season from May to September which is the peak period of influenza.



Influenza, or flu, is a highly contagious respiratory illness. The influenza viruses are mainly spread person to person by droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze, or talk. Influenza may also spread when people share eating or drinking utensils as well as when they touch surfaces with infected droplets and then touch their mouth, eyes, or nose. Therefore, people with flu-like illness (fever, sore throat, cough, stuffy or runny nose, and muscle aches) should be absent for home care, avoid close contact to and sharing utensils with others to prevent spreading of influenza viruses. They should wear face masks, or cover nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing and sneezing, and wash hands often.

During the flu season (rainy and cold seasons), the DDC encourages crowded places such as schools and prisons, to run screenings for influenza. People with flu-like illness should be isolated and maintain strict personal hygiene. Frequent cleansing of sharing spaces especially touching surfaces such as door knobs that might be contaminated with the viruses is helpful. Hand-washing facilities with soap or alcohol hand sanitizer, and face masks should be provided.

Patients who take medicines to relieve influenza illness but symptoms do not improve within 2 days, or those with worsen illness such as shortness of breath or rapid breathing, chest pain, persistent vomiting, confusion or sudden dizziness, a hospital medical care is immediately needed. The DDC strongly advises people at risk of having severe influenza illness to get the annual influenza vaccine to protect them from the disease and to reduce the disease severity. The at risk groups include 1) the 4 months-pregnant women, 2) 6 months to 2 years old children, 3) people with underlying chronic diseases including COPD, asthma, heart disease, CVD, kidney failure, diabetes, and cancer under chemotherapy, 4) the elderly aged 65 years or more, 5) the mentally disabled, 6) Thalassemia, and people with impaired immunity (including HIV with symptoms), and 7) obese people weigh 100 kg. (or BMI 35 kg./sqm) or more.

For queries or additional information, please call DDC hotline 1422.



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