

# Department of Disease Control

## Weekly Disease Forecast No.220\_Diphtheria (28 July – 3 August 2019)

From the national disease surveillance system, this year (2019) up to the present, there had been 15 diphtheria cases of which 1 died. The patients were found in 9 provinces including Chiangrai, Tak, Sakaeo, Nakhonratchasima, Udonthani, Yasothon, Songkhla, Satun, and Yala.

The diphtheria incidence rate of this year is 2 times higher than the same period of last year (2018) and the median of the past 5 years (2014 – 2018). The highest incidence rates occurred among the infants - children less than 9 years old followed by the 10 - 19 years age groups.



According to this week disease forecast, there is a continue risk of sporadic diphtheria in crowded places such as child day-care centers and boarding schools especially in some areas with low diphtheria vaccination coverage. At risk groups include infants, young children and students aged less than 9 years and below followed by the 10 - 19 years age group.

Diphtheria is an acute bacterial infection of respiratory system which can cause mild to severe illness. Symptoms, develop 2 – 5 days after infection, include fever, sore throat, and swollen lymph glands in the neck. Severe illness presents with swollen neck and thick gray or white patch of dead tissue in the throat and tonsils caused by the bacterial toxin. Complications are blocking of the airway and absorption of the toxin into the blood stream that may cause damage to the heart, kidneys and peripheral nerves and thus can lead to death. The severely ill patient must visit a hospital for a special medical care immediately to save life.

Diphtheria is spread from person to person usually through respiratory droplets from coughing, sneezing and close contact. A person can also get infected by contacting with shared utensils contaminated with the bacteria. Some mild cases can transmit the bacteria to people around them. Recover patients might not develop immunity against the disease.

The best way to prevent diphtheria is to get vaccinated. The Department of Disease Control therefore advises parents to bring their children aged 2 months old onward to get the complete vaccination series against diphtheria (DTP vaccine) as per the MOPH recommended immunization schedule. Pregnant women should also get the dT vaccine as per the MOPH schedule.

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

