

# Department of Disease Control Weekly Disease Forecast No.229\_Influenza (29 September – 5 October 2019)

This year up to 23 September 2019, the Department of Disease Control reveals 271,931 influenza cases of which 18 had died. Provinces with the top five highest incidence rates (cases per 100,000 population) were Bangkok, Rayong, Chanthaburi, Nakhonpathom, and Chiangmai respectively.

During this influenza season, the occurrence of the disease is likely to continue throughout the year with an estimated number of 50,000 to 60,000 cases. As most of the cases are young children and students, they therefore can easily transmit the influenza viruses to people in their families.



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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