

# Department of Disease Control

## Weekly Disease Forecast No.256\_Influenza (5 - 11 April 2020)

From the national disease surveillance system, this year from 1 January to 30 March, the Department of Disease Control (DDC) reveals 92,129 influenza cases of which 3 had died. The total number of cases was higher than the median of the past five years at the same time period. Age groups with the highest incidence rates (case per 100,000 population) were newborn to 4 Years, 5 - 9 years, and 10 - 14 years respectively. The top three highest incidence provinces were Phayao, Chiangmai and Nongkhai.

This year up to 2 April, there have been 24 influenza confirmed or suspected influenza clusters in 18 provinces. There were 15 clusters occurred in schools, universities, prisons, and work places and 3 clusters in mass gathering training camps.

According to this week disease forecast, the occurrence of influenza is likely to continue as Thailand is approaching the rainy season in May.

The total number of cases of last year (2019) was almost three times higher than the median of the past five years. The peak periods occur in rainy season (May to September) and cold season (December to February).



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. Medicines for relieve symptoms, enough bed rest and drinking water help patients to recover within 5 to 7 days. However, those 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.

During the flu season (rainy and cold seasons), the DDC encourages crowded places such as schools and prisons, to run screenings for influenza to prevent outbreaks. 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.

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



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