

Department of Disease Control Weekly Disease Forecast No. 279_Malaria (20 – 26 September 2020)

From the national disease surveillance system, this year up to 17 September 2020, the Department of Disease Control (DDC) reveals 3,415 malaria cases with 1 death in 51 provinces. The highest number of cases were found in border provinces including Yala (1,070), Tak (851), Kanchanaburi (425) respectively. Patients were Thais (2,479 or 73%) and Non-Thais (936 or 27%).

The highest number of cases were found in the age groups 25 – 44 years (28%), 5 – 14 years (24%), 45 years or more (21%) and 15 – 24 years (21%). Most were farmers (35%), children and students (34%) and labors (20%).

This week disease forecast reveals, despite the fact that the number of cases has dramatically decreased during the past decades, there is still a sporadic risk of malaria especially in some mountainous, forest and waterfalls areas during the rainy season.



Malaria is a mosquito-borne disease caused by *Plasmodium* parasites. The *P. falciparum* and *P. vivax* parasites pose the greatest threat. The parasites' development period in infective female *Anopheles* mosquitoes takes 10 – 12 days. Malaria vectors bite between dusk and dawn and spread the parasites to other people. Infected mothers can also transmit parasites to their children during pregnancy. The risk of transfusion-transmitted malaria is higher in malaria endemic areas.

The DDC advises all people to avoid mosquito bites by wearing long sleeve shirts, long pants and applying mosquito repellents with adequate amounts of DEET to exposed skin, sleeping in rooms with mosquito screens or under insecticide-treated nets and spraying indoor residual insecticides.

Malaria symptoms usually appear 10 - 14 days after the infective mosquito bite. The acute illness include fever, headache, chills, muscle ache, malaise, norsea and anorexia– may be mild and difficult to recognize as malaria. If not treated within 24 hours, *P. falciparum* malaria can progress to severe illness, often leading to death. Fever, chills, sweating, fatigue and exhausted can occur at intervals. Severe illnesses frequently include severe anemia, jaundice, enlarged liver and spleen, seizures, mental confusion, respiratory distress in relation to metabolic acidosis, multi-organ failure, coma, and death. Children under five years of age and pregnant women have higher risk of severe malaria. Patients with these malaria symptoms and history of living or visiting malaria-risk mountainous, forest and waterfalls areas during the past 2 weeks to 2 months should seek urgent medical treatment at the hospital for life-saving.

For queries or additional information, please call DDC hot line 1422.

