

Department of Disease Control

Weekly Disease Forecast No.284_Drowning (25 - 31 October 2020)

From the Department of Disease Control surveillance system, there were 3,306 drowning deaths from the national death certificate system last year (2019). Children aged less than 15 years old were the 559 deaths. From the Health Data Center of the Ministry of Public Health, this year up to 30 September, there were 692 deaths in children aged less than 15 years old. It is noted with concern that drowning is the first cause of death in Thai children of this age group.

Last week (12 – 18 October), there were 7 drowning deaths in Chiangmai (3), Sakaeo (2), Lampang (1) and Satun (1). Causes include accidentally falling into the water sources, lack of swimming, survival and rescue skills and lack management of risky water sources.

According to this week disease forecast, the risk of drowning tends to continue in areas with heavy rains, flash floods, and fast-flowing streams.



The Department of Disease Control (DDC) warns people to be well aware of the risk and avoid drowning accidents during floods as follows: 1) avoid water related activities in fast-flowing streams, 2) in unavoidable situation, prepare floatation devices such as life jackets, swimming rubber rings, empty plastic gallon jugs or floating dry coconuts for all water related activities, and 3) avoid drinking alcohol during water related activities.

All communities should implement preventive measures against drowning, i.e. 1) survey for risky water sources such as community water resources, check dams and irrigation canals, 2) communicate and warn the communities of drowning risk and promote community participation using available channels such as village broadcast, 3) install safety fences and warning signs at all risky natural water sources and provide safety devices, e.g. empty plastic gallon jugs or bottles tied up with ropes, swimming rubber rings, sticks, and belts, and 4) do not leave risk groups such as children, the elderly, the disabled and people with chronic medical illnesses unattended.

In case of seeing a drowning person, do not attempt to jump to rescue him or her as the person may be panic and pull you underwater. Therefore, you should use the measure “**shout, throw, and extend**”, i.e. 1) **Shout** for help from people nearby and ask them to call the Emergency Medical Service (EMS) hotline 1669; 2) **Throw** floatation devices such as empty plastic gallon jugs or bottles tied up with ropes or swimming rubber rings to the drowning person; 3) **Extend** objects such as sticks, belts or cloths to pull the person from the water; and 4) Give the person rescue breaths and CPR while waiting for the EMS team.

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

