

# Department of Disease Control

## Weekly Disease Forecast No.5/2021\_Food Poisoning (31 January – 6 February 2021)

From the national disease surveillance system, the Department of Disease Control reveals that last year (2020) there were 87,093 food poisoning cases with one death. The highest incidence rates (cases per 100,000 population) were found in age groups 15 – 24 years, the elderly aged 65 years and over, and 25 – 34 years respectively. Last week there were two clusters of food poisoning with no deaths. One cluster of 84 cases occurred in a women prison in Phitsanulok province. The suspected food was a fish dish. Another cluster of 200 cases was found in a school in Nan province. The suspected lunch dishes composed of steamed chicken rice with spicy sauce and melon.

According to this week disease forecast, food poisoning cases are likely to continue as the warmer weather will allow easy bacterial growth in foods. Risk of food poisoning outbreaks is increasing when food is prepared in large amount with unhygienic manner and then kept for several hours or overnight without reheating before consumption. Moreover, raw or semi-cooked food is a risky cause of food poisoning.



The Department of Disease Control therefore advises people to always follow good personal hygiene, i.e. “eat freshly-cooked and clean food, use serving spoon and wash hands often”, and drink only safe water and ice. All individuals should avoid consuming food that is left overnight out of refrigeration or food with unusual smell. Food that is kept more than 2 hours should always be reheated before consumption. Food handlers should always practice good personal hygiene including washing hands often especially before cooking food and after using toilets. Paying attention to food cleanliness will help prevent pathogen contamination. They should also wear masks and hygiene caps. In case of having wounds on hands, food handlers should always wear plastic gloves while cooking. If preparing food boxes, cooked rice should be put separately. Be cautious that foods with coconut milk may easily spoil.

Symptoms of food poisoning are nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, and diarrhea (having three or more loose or liquid stools per day). The best first aid is drinking Oral Rehydration Salts (ORS) solution to prevent dehydration. Medical care should be sought immediately in case of severe illness such as severe abdominal pain, fever, headache, bloody diarrhea, prolong vomiting or signs of dehydration (dry mouth, decreased urination, dizziness, fatigue, or increased heart rate or breathing rate).

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

