

Department of Disease Control

Weekly Disease Forecast No. 13/2021_ *Streptococcus suis* Infection (28 March - 3 April 2021)

From the disease surveillance system, the Department of Disease Control (DDC) reveals 46 cases (3 had died) of *Streptococcus suis* infection during 1 January to 22 March 2021. Most of the cases were found in the elderly and working age groups, i.e., the 55 - 64 years old followed by the elderly aged 65 years and over, and the 45 - 54 years old. The disease were mostly found in the northern followed by the northeastern regions. Provinces with the highest cases were Lampang, Chanthaburi, and Phichit respectively.

According to this week disease forecast, *Streptococcus suis* infection tends to occur sporadically especially in the high risk regions due to a risky behavior of eating local favorite food, i.e. raw pork with fresh blood and close contact with pigs with no proper personal protection. Occupations with the highest risk are farm workers, slaughter house workers, and fresh pork meat merchants. People who risk severe illness include those with alcoholism and chronic diseases such as diabetes mellitus, kidney disease, cancer, and heart disease.



Streptococcus suis infection, a zoonotic disease, is usually asymptomatic in pigs, but can result in septicemia, meningitis, pneumonia and arthritis. Humans can be infected by consumption of contaminated raw or under-cooked pork and fresh blood or direct contact with infected pigs or pork products through wounds on the skin and mucous membrane of eyes. The incubation period ranges from a few hours up to 5 days. Symptoms include high fever and meningitis (severe headache and dizziness), vomiting, diarrhea, neck stiffness, intolerance of light, decreased level of consciousness, and hearing loss. Complications include arthritis, pneumonia, endocarditis, deafness, vertigo, ataxia, and skin lesion (hemorrhagic blebs). Severe illness, especially in patients with underlying diseases such as diabetes, heart diseases, hypertension, liver cirrhosis, and cancer, might result in death due to sepsis. Therefore, the history of raw pork consumption or close contact with pigs is helpful for life saving and risk reduction of deafness.

The DDC advises all consumers to avoid consumption of raw or under-cooked pork and fresh blood. Pork should be cooked to reach an internal temperature of 70°C, or until the juices are clear and not pink. Buy only fresh pork meat that looks normal (pink and no abnormal smell) from reliable source. For those who prepare pork should be aware of the disease, if there is a wound on the hand, cover it properly with waterproof bandage or wear plastic gloves before handling raw pork, keep raw pork and ready-to-eat foods separately, never share the same knife and chopping board between raw and cooked foods, and wash hands thoroughly in between handling of raw and cooked foods. Farm owners should improve pig raising conditions and increase self-protection among farm workers, e.g. wearing proper clothes, boots and gloves that protect direct contact with pigs and also washing hands thoroughly after handling pigs. Pork meat merchants should buy pork from standard farm, clean the stall with disinfectant solution daily after use and always keep pork meat at below 10 degrees Celsius.

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



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