

Department of Disease Control revealed that zika virus infection was found negative in the third newborn with microcephaly. The public was encouraged to eliminate mosquito breeding sites to prevent mosquito-borne diseases.

On 17 October 2016, Dr. Jessada Chokdamrongsuk, Director-General of the Department of Disease Control, made a statement after the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) meeting that there would be a continue risk of mosquito-borne diseases during this rainy season with a lot of standing water sites in abandoned containers where the mosquito lays eggs.

The Ministry of Public Health has implemented prevention and control measures against the diseases and has encouraged people to use the measure called “3 Do’s to prevent 3 diseases”, i.e. 1. empty or cover water-storage containers routinely 2. dispose garbages properly and 3. keep houses tidy to prevent dengue, chikungunya and Zika virus. The public has now become more aware of the diseases and the importance of mosquito breeding site elimination. According to the strong surveillance efforts in the country, Zika virus has not been found to be transmitted person-to-person by direct contact or breathing. Since early 2016, Thailand has performed qualify laboratory testing for Zika virus in approximately 13,000 specimens.

Dr.Jessada also stated that from the national disease surveillance system during 1 January to 14 October 2016, there were 520 Zika virus cases of which 79 new cases were detected last week (8 - 14 October). Each week, quite similar number of cases have been reported but confined only in some districts and provinces. Among the 57 pregnant women infected with the disease, 12 had delivered normal newborns. The normal baby born on 15 October 2016 but had suspected ultrasound result will be on a close follow up. So far, there were 2 confirmed Zika-associated microcephaly cases. The third newborn with microcephaly was found to be negative for Zika virus infection.

To lower the risk of being infected with Zika virus, it is advised, especially for pregnant women, to use insect repellents and cover as much of the body as possible with long, light-coloured clothing. Only registered insect repellents with known effectiveness such as DEET are recommended. In general, each repellent product has different effective duration. Therefore, all should follow the label directions for each product, do not apply the product too frequently, and do not apply it under clothing. In case of using with sunscreen products, apply the sunscreen first.

Generally, Zika disease symptoms are mild. The most common symptoms are mild fever, rash, conjunctivitis (red eyes), and joint pain. Most patients recover within 2 - 7 days. If not, one should go to see a doctor immediately. However, Zika virus may cause problem to pregnant women as there is an epidemiological evidence indicating the association between Zika virus infection and microcephaly in newborns.

As for dengue situation this year, up until now, there were 47,649 cases with 38 deaths. There were 1,305 new cases during last week. Provinces with the highest incidence rates during the past 4 weeks were Songkhla, Phatthalung, Chiangmai, Maehongson, and Pattani. There were 13 chikungunya patients with no death.

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