

Department of Disease Control Weekly Disease Forecast No.159_Influenza (6 - 12 May 2018)

Based on the national disease surveillance system, the Department of Disease Control (DDC) has found 43,753 influenza patients with 5 deaths since the beginning of 2018. Provinces with the highest influenza incidence rates (cases per 100,000 population) were Chiangmai, Phayao, Lamphun, Bangkok, Lampang, and Uttaradit respectively.

The number of cases is higher than those of last year compared to the same period of time and also the median of the past 5 years. The 18 influenza clusters were mostly occurred in crowded places such as schools, prisons, temples, and military camps.



According to this week disease forecast, the occurrence of influenza is likely to continue due to weather variability and frequent rains during the forthcoming rainy season.

Influenza, or flu, is a highly contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. The viruses are mainly spread person to person by droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze, or talk. Influenza also may spread when people share eating or drinking utensils as well as when they touch surfaces with infected droplets and then touch their mouth, eyes, or nose. Therefore, the prevention of the disease can be done by avoiding close contact with those with flu-like illness, avoiding sharing utensils and washing hands often.

The Department of Disease Control advises those at risk of having severe influenza to get the influenza vaccine annually at a public hospital nearby to protect themselves from the disease, reduce the disease severity and chance to be admitted to hospitals. The most at risk people include 1) obese people 2) pregnant women and women after giving birth within 14 days 3) people with underlying chronic diseases such as COPD, asthma, diabetes, heart, kidney, and liver diseases, Thalassemia, and people with impaired immunity 4) mentally disabled and people with epilepsy 5) those under 18 years old receiving aspirin therapy 6) children under 2 years old and 7) people older than 65 years.

Patients with influenza-like illness, i.e. fever, sore throat, cough, stuffy or runny nose and muscle aches, in crowded places should stay home or be isolated to prevent spreading of influenza viruses to others. They should wear face masks, or cover nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing and sneezing, and wash hands often. Frequent cleansing of the patients' rooms, especially touching surfaces such as door knobs that might be contaminated with the viruses, is helpful.

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



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