

REPORT DISEASE AND HEALTH HAZARD NEWS OF INTEREST ALONG THE BORDER

August 25 - 31, 2022

WEEKLY EVENTS

- The Hfocus news agency reported that the Secretariat Office of the ASEAN Center for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases (ACPHEED) had its soft launch on August 26, 2022. The ACPHEED Secretariat Office in Bangkok, Thailand is located on the 15th floor of the Bangrak Medical Center Building and will serve as an ASEAN Excellence and Resource Center to enhance performance and the ability to prevent, detect and respond to public health emergencies in the region. It will also include synchronizing work with partner agencies and countries outside the ASEAN region.
- On August 27, 2022, the Thai Post reported on the 'tomato flu' outbreak in India in which there are almost 100 cases found in children under 5 years of age. The viral disease has similarities with hand, foot and mouth disease. The pathogen is not a new virus and the symptoms are mild. The Ministry of Public Health, Thailand has assigned the Department of Disease Control and related agencies to monitor the situation even though there are no reports of cases in the country. Thailand is now open to receive international travelers and therefore, must prepare screening and treatment guidelines in the event that a case is detected.

BEWARE OF HERBAL PRODUCTS MIXED WITH STEROIDS

On August 29, 2022, the Deputy Secretary-General of the Food and Drug Administration announced that the government identified and shut down the sub-standard production sources of herbal juices mixed with steroids in Khon Kaen and Rayong. The products are produced in a variety of forms and contain steroids, which provide risks to consumers. Such substances have anti-inflammatory properties and can suppress the immune system. This may lead people to believe that the products can quickly treat various ailments. Some of these pills are mixed with herbs and sold in various forms for example, as bolus pills, "Pradong" pills, traditional pills, and herbal powder pills. Most of the victims are elderly people who buy products to treat themselves.

Sellers often claim that to sell safe herbal products used to treat a variety of diseases, including bone spurs, peripheral neuropathy, 'pins and needles', gout, back pain, waist pain, joint pain, paralysis, etc. When taking these products, people may see results in the early stages, but if used continuously for a long time, abnormal symptoms may develop like swelling of the face, lumps on the cheek, droopy neck, swelling of the body, and the onset of kidney failure. If the product is stopped abruptly, it can lead to shock and even death. Steroids are therefore 'specially controlled drugs'. Only pharmacies are allowed to sell steroid products to patients with a doctor's prescription.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIALS

Public Health Officers and volunteers should educate the community about purchasing and consuming unregulated herbal medicines so they can learn the risks of steroid substances that affect the body. They should emphasize caution on buying products on online platforms that are not certified by the Food and Drug Administration. It was found that most of the products are not standardized and often contain 'steroid' substances, which are harmful to health in the long run. People should be cautious when consuming medicinal herbs without consulting a health care professional. These products should only be purchased from a licensed pharmacy. Otherwise, long-term health complications may occur.

INFORMATION COLLECTED AND ANALYZED BY

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