

REPORT DISEASE AND HEALTH HAZARD NEWS OF INTEREST ALONG THE BORDER

December 22 - 28, 2022

WEEKLY EVENTS

- On December 27, 2022, the Department of Disease Control warned the public about playing in unsanitary, untreated water sources due to the risk of amoebic encephalitis following reports that a South Korean national died from the disease after returning from Thailand. This disease is rare but life threatening if proper treatment is not received in time. Prevention methods include avoiding swimming or diving in natural water sources that are not clean and not aspirating water into the nasal cavity. If choking on water, immediately direct the water out of the nose then rinse the nose with boiled water or saline solution.
- On December 23, 2022, the Department of Disease Control (DDC) reported on the global polio situation. There was an increase in the number of vaccine-derived polio cases. Most outbreaks were found in areas with low vaccination coverage. During this time, measures to prevent and control COVID-19 have been relaxed, and the number of tourists traveling to Thailand has increased. Therefore, there is a risk that the polio virus may have spread into the country. The DDC has informed local authorities to provide vaccines for unvaccinated children or children with incomplete vaccine courses. Vaccination is especially urgent in areas with low immunization coverage such as Pattani, Narathiwat, Yala and four districts of Songkhla province.

BE CAREFUL OF TOXINS WHEN CONSUMING PUFFERFISH

According to the weekly epidemic report from the Department of Disease Control (Week #51, December 19–25, 2022), there were three cases of food poisoning in Chiang Mai from consuming poached fish. All three patients lived in the same household and had symptoms compatible with tetrodotoxin poisoning, which is currently under investigation. Tetrodotoxin can be found in all species of pufferfish. Such toxins are located in the skin, liver, intestines and the highest concentration of toxin is in the ovaries. Without special culinary training, the toxin may remain in the fish meat when prepared for consumption. Tetrodotoxin is not destroyed by heat, even if boiled in hot water.

Acute symptoms arise quickly from 15 minutes to 20 hours after consuming tetrodotoxin. The symptoms may deteriorate within 4-24 hours or may intensify and lead to death within 4-6 hours. Initial symptoms include numbness in the tongue and lips with spread to the face and limbs, nausea, vomiting, paralysis, respiratory failure and death. The severity of the symptoms depends on the amount of toxin ingested. There is no direct treatment for tetrodotoxin. If possible, the body will excrete the toxin by itself. Treatment focuses on relieving symptoms. The best prevention method is to not consume pufferfish at all. Refrain from consuming fish fillets that have been inadequately prepared or whose origin is unknown to avoid the risk of exposure to tetrodotoxin.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIALS

Public health officials should coordinate with local officials to publicize knowledge and dangers of consuming pufferfish among their communities. It is recommended to avoid consuming any type of pufferfish. When buying fish, consumers should buy fish that they can clearly identify. Buyers should be careful when purchasing filleted fish. If at any time there is news about patients with tetrodotoxin poisoning, people should temporarily refrain from eating fish or fish products of unknown origin or species to reduce the risk of tetrodotoxin poisoning. If there are symptoms of suspected tetrodotoxin poisoning, the patient should see a doctor and provide an accurate history of recent food consumption in order to quickly get the correct treatment.

INFORMATION COLLECTED AND ANALYZED BY

Multisectoral Capacity Development Program for Public Health Emergency Detection and Response in Border Areas

Office of International Cooperation, Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health, Thailand
Supported by the Thailand MOPH - US CDC Collaboration on Public Health

CONTACT

oicddc@gmail.com
02-5903832
www.ddc.go.th/oic

Sources

- <https://t.ly/2-yr>
- <https://t.ly/mXjM>
- https://t.ly/EaU_
- <https://www.thailandplus.tv/archives/652357>
- <https://ddc.moph.go.th/brc/news.php?news=30674&deptcode=brc>
- Image courtesy of: <https://www.thairath.co.th/content/684821>