

REPORT DISEASE AND HEALTH HAZARD NEWS OF INTEREST ALONG THE BORDER

February 2 - 8, 2023

WEEKLY EVENTS

- On February 1, 2023, Mae Hong Son Province opened an electric vehicle charging station to promote the use of clean energy. The station was opened as part of the province's "National Awareness to Use Energy Wisely" strategy. It is the first station of its kind to open for service in the province, following the province's focus on the Smart City Strategy. This will help to develop Mae Hong Son into an energy-smart province that can support various forms of electric vehicles and provide a more comfortable, safe and environmentally friendly experience for residents, including tourists.
- The Lao People's Democratic Republic has been certified by the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) for its midwifery education course, making it the first country in ASEAN to receive this certification. ICM is a non-governmental organization and a globally recognized agency for midwifery. The course of study for midwives at the Health Sciences College Institute in Khwaeng Champasak, Luang Prabang and Chiang Kwang has been assessed by ICM, and it has been found that this education can produce midwives who can meet the health needs of up to 80% of mothers and reduce maternal deaths during pregnancy and childbirth. Additionally, the course of study also provides connections and services with the related health service network.

BEWARE OF LEAD POISONING

Data from the Week 5 (30 Jan. – 5 Feb. 2023) epidemic report of the Department of Disease Control showed the results of health checks among workers at a lead smelting plant in Ratchaburi Province. There were 18 people with blood lead levels above healthy standards. Six more cases were reported this week, all of which are under further investigation.

Lead is a common environmental contaminant that can enter the body through the gastrointestinal tract by eating contaminated food, inhalation by inhaling dust, smoke, or fumes such as car fumes or cigarette smoke, and dermal exposure through industrial or dermal exposure, which is most likely to occur in workers. Lead in water and gasoline can also be absorbed through the skin. There are two types of lead poisoning: acute and chronic. Acute poisoning, which usually occurs in children under 3 years of age, starts with convulsions and loss of consciousness, but other symptoms such as lethargy, loss of appetite, anemia, vomiting, and restlessness may precede them. In 3-6 weeks, symptoms of dementia may appear. Chronic symptoms may not be obvious, but can include seizures, behavioral changes, intellectual abnormality, and peripheral neuropathy. In older children, there may be lead streaks (lead lines) on the gums, which is a characteristic feature of the disease. If you suspect exposure to lead due to symptoms or risk factors such as being in a risky environment or engaging in a risky occupation, you should see a doctor for an accurate diagnosis as the accumulation of lead in very high quantities can be life-threatening.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIALS

Health officials should coordinate with local officials to jointly disseminate information about lead poisoning to the community. People should observe early symptoms and be aware of risk factors, particularly for those living near industrial plants related to lead. It is recommended to keep the residence clean and free of dust, mask-wearing for children, and be cautious while playing with soil, making sure to wash hands and take showers afterwards. If houses are near streams, creeks, or swamps, the water should not be used for consumption as it may be contaminated with lead. For those living in risk areas, it is suggested to see a doctor periodically to check blood lead levels for personal health and safety.

INFORMATION COLLECTED AND ANALYZED BY



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

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Sources

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