

REPORT DISEASE AND HEALTH HAZARD NEWS OF INTEREST ALONG THE BORDER

March 23 - 29, 2023

WEEKLY EVENTS

- On March 26, 2023, the Ministry of Public Health announced a national plan to combat tuberculosis, with the goal of ending the disease in Thailand by 2035. The plan has already achieved some success, as Thailand was able to remove itself from the list of countries with the highest levels of drug-resistant tuberculosis in the world in 2022. However, Thailand is still on the list of countries with the highest number of new tuberculosis patients, due in large part to obstacles such as inadequate screening for tuberculosis among migrant workers, difficulty accessing continuous treatment, lack of public knowledge about the disease and how to prevent its spread, problems with population mobility, poor quality of life and inadequate social welfare benefits for migrant workers. Based on research findings, the Ministry of Public Health recommends that relevant government agencies, private sector organizations, and civil society work together to develop a comprehensive system for preventing and treating tuberculosis that covers all migrant workers, ensuring that they receive regular screening and continuous treatment. Collaboration should be established with social organizations, inter-country organizations, and global financing mechanisms to increase the coverage of tuberculosis screening and provide appropriate treatment to migrant workers at no cost, according to human rights principles. Cooperation between government agencies, international organizations and neighboring countries is necessary to reach the target.

WHOOPING COUGH (PERTUSSIS) CAN BE PREVENTED WITH VACCINATION

From the Week 12 Disease Report (March 20-26, 2023) published by the Department of Disease Control, there was a suspected case of pertussis in a 5-month-old female of Burmese nationality in Samut Prakan province, and a confirmed case in a 6-year-old female of Thai nationality in Bueng Kan province. Both cases had no history of receiving the pertussis vaccine. Pertussis is a respiratory tract infection caused by a bacterial infection with an incubation period of approximately 7-10 days, but sometimes up to 20 days. The infection causes inflammation of the respiratory tract and coughing, with symptoms similar to those of a common cold in the early stages, such as coughing and a slight runny nose, which may or may not be accompanied by a low-grade fever. Unlike the common cold, however, the cough becomes increasingly severe. Severe coughing fits can last for about 2-3 weeks. Some patients may experience coughing so severe that they have difficulty breathing or make a whooping sound while breathing deeply. The severity and frequency of coughing fits gradually decrease over a period of 6-10 weeks, assuming there are no complications.

Pertussis can be prevented with a vaccine, so parents are advised to have their children vaccinated according to the vaccination schedule. Migrant workers who bring their family to Thailand can purchase health insurance cards from the Ministry of Public Health at a rate of 365 baht per person (1 baht/day) for their children if they are under 7 years old. The cards are valid for 1 year from the date of purchase. They will receive the same full health protection and access as Thai children, and can receive routine vaccinations at their local healthcare facilities to ensure protection from vaccine-preventable diseases.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIALS

Health officials should coordinate with other related agencies to provide knowledge about vaccine-preventable diseases, including pertussis, diphtheria and others. They should share information on the causes of the diseases, the mode of transmission, and how to prevent such diseases, especially for families with children. It is important to publicize the significance of bringing children to receive vaccinations and to provide guidance to foreign migrant workers on how to purchase health insurance cards to enable their children to receive vaccinations according at healthcare facilities near their homes. All of these efforts are aimed at reducing the risk of disease and preventing complications from vaccine-preventable diseases

INFORMATION COLLECTED AND ANALYZED BY

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

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