

REPORT DISEASE AND HEALTH HAZARD NEWS OF INTEREST ALONG THE BORDER

April 20 - 26, 2023

WEEKLY EVENTS

- April 25th of every year is World Malaria Day. The Ministry of Public Health launched a campaign to honor World Malaria Day 2023 with a policy to elevate measures that control the spread of malaria in areas with high cases and reaffirm the aim to make Thailand malaria-free by 2024. The MOPH also provided rapid malaria test kits and chemical sprays to six high-risk malaria provinces along the Thai-Myanmar border, which include Mae Hong Son, Tak, Kanchanaburi, Phetchaburi, Ratchaburi, and Prachuap Khiri Khan.
- On April 25, 2023, the Law Enforcement Center for Health Products announced the results of their work in cracking down on the illegal production and distribution network of "NQ S Cross", a weight loss supplement that contains the dangerous substance, sibutramine. The owners of the product and the major distributor network were found in the provinces of Tak, Sukhothai, and Phitsanulok, and authorities seized their products.
- On April 26, 2023, the Department of Disease Control reported the case of a 34-year-old Myanmar national who died in his room in Bangkok on April 17, 2023. The investigation revealed that the deceased tested positive for COVID-19 and had severe pneumonia. He had not been vaccinated against COVID-19. He began feeling unwell, developed a fever and had symptoms that included red eyes. He bought medicine and self-medicated, without seeking medical treatment. The Department of Disease Control urges those who have not been vaccinated against COVID-19 to get vaccinated as soon as possible to build immunity against all strains of the virus.

SILICOSIS IS A NON-CURABLE DISEASE SO TAKING CARE OF YOUR HEALTH IS NECESSARY

From the disease surveillance report of the Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health, Week 16 (April 17-23, 2023), seven workers across two metal recycling plants in Phetchaburi Province were confirmed, via chest X-rays, to have silicosis. Silicosis is a respiratory disease caused by the inhalation of tiny particles of silica found in many types of rocks. Over time, exposure can lead to damage and scarring of lung tissue, reduced lung capacity, and shortness of breath. This disease cannot be cured and initially presents without symptoms, but can be detected by lung X-rays. Symptoms will begin to appear after 5-15 years, and include chronic coughing, excessive phlegm, and shortness of breath during physical activity. Acute symptoms can lead to respiratory failure and death within five years.

Occupational risks includes working in the industrial sector, such as cement manufacturing, construction of buildings and structures, excavation work, stone cutting and polishing, glassmaking, pottery and ceramics production, and clay kiln firing. To prevent this disease, workers in the relevant industrial factories should wear protective respiratory equipment that can filter out fine dust particles during their working hours, and reduce risky behaviors such as smoking. They should also have regular health check-ups with medical professionals to include chest X-rays. People with silicosis should regularly see a doctor for supportive treatment to alleviate symptoms and prevent other complications. Although this disease cannot be cured, proper practices can help patients live longer.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIALS

Health officials and local organizations should collaborate in promoting knowledge about silicosis among the community. By focusing on industrial factories and places with exposure to the dust particles that cause silicosis, local responsible agencies should organize activities to educate workers and nearby residents on self-protection, and recommend that health checks be conducted annually. Those responsible for overseeing local industrial factories should be strict in surveying, checking, and evaluating the operations of the factories in accordance with regulations to maintain a safe environment and prevent danger to the public and to the employees.

INFORMATION COLLECTED AND ANALYZED BY

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

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