

# REPORT DISEASE AND HEALTH HAZARD NEWS OF INTEREST ALONG THE BORDER

May 11 - 17, 2023

## WEEKLY EVENTS

- On May 15, 2023, the Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health, reported on the COVID-19 situation in Thailand, which has shown an increasing trend following the Songkran festival. In the past week, there were 2,356 patients admitted to hospitals, averaging 336 cases per day, an increase of 39% compared to the previous week. The majority of severe cases, such as pneumonia and patients requiring ventilator support, were mainly from the group of 608 individuals who have not received the COVID-19 vaccine. Many other cases were individuals with low immunity levels who were vaccinated more than six months ago. It is strongly recommended that the public receive the COVID-19 vaccine along with the influenza vaccine as soon as possible to reduce the risk of severe illness from both diseases. If people have symptoms similar to COVID-19, they should avoid close contact with the group of 608 individuals and take an antigen test. If the test result is positive (two lines), they should wear a mask and closely monitor their symptoms. If symptoms worsen, such as high fever and difficulty breathing, it is advised to seek medical attention immediately. For individuals with compromised immune systems, it is recommended to receive a complete immunization service or LAAB at state general hospitals or other affiliated public hospitals. Additionally, since schools are reopening this week, parents and teachers are urged to closely monitor the health of their children. If there are symptoms of respiratory tract infections such as fever, cough, runny nose, and sore throat, it is advised to keep the child at home until the symptoms resolve in order to reduce the risk of transmission within the school.

## RABIES PREVENTION IS THE WAY

Rabies is a contagious and life-threatening disease. Without vaccination after exposure, every patient will succumb to the disease. In recent years, Thailand has conducted campaigns to raise awareness about the dangers of rabies. The first campaign was organized on September 28, 2007, which is now recognized as World Rabies Day, and it has continued ever since. Despite these efforts, there are still annual cases and deaths caused by rabies. According to the Division of Epidemiology, Department of Disease Control, there were three rabies deaths each in 2021 and 2022. Since January 1, 2023, there have been five deaths, with the two most recent cases reported between April 24th and May 7th, 2023. These cases were individuals from Myanmar residing in the provinces of Tak and Songkhla. According to the Mekong Basin Disease Surveillance (MBDS) network, Myanmar has had a significantly high number of rabies-related deaths in the past three years, with 52, 15, and 39 deaths in 2021, 2022, and 2023 respectively. As mentioned above, there is no cure for this disease, and every individual will die if not vaccinated immediately following exposure. Therefore, prevention is the best method. Basic prevention measures for the public to practice include vaccinating all pets, such as dogs, cats, and other animals according to the vaccination schedule. The first dose should be given at the age of 2-4 months, followed by a booster shot one month later, and subsequent boosters every year. This is to prevent and reduce the risk of rabies.



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIALS

Livestock and animal health officials should coordinate with the local public health offices and the local government to jointly raise public awareness about the dangers of rabies and prevention methods. Agencies should take responsibility to manage stray dog populations and reduce the risk of rabies by administering rabies vaccinations and sterilizing stray dogs. They should also advise residents to have their pets, such as dogs and cats, vaccinated against rabies annually. For the general public, if people are bitten, scratched, or come into contact with an animal of unknown vaccination history, they should immediately clean the wound with clean water and seek medical attention to receive a rabies vaccination at the nearest healthcare facility.

## 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  
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### CONTACT

oic.ddc@gmail.com

02-5903832

www.ddc.go.th/oic

## Sources

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- <https://shorturl-ddc.moph.go.th/i1RK7>
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