

REPORT DISEASE AND HEALTH HAZARD NEWS OF INTEREST ALONG THE BORDER

May 4 - 10, 2023

WEEKLY EVENTS

- On May 6, 2023, the World Health Organization declared an end to emergency status of the COVID-19 pandemic, which aligns with Thailand's announcement made on October 1, 2022. Currently, COVID-19 is managed similarly to other endemic diseases, with recommendations for the population to receive vaccinations once a year, especially for high-risk groups. Wearing face masks is advised when experiencing symptoms or when entering high-risk areas. Over the past two weeks, the COVID-19 situation in Thailand has seen an average of 10 deaths per week, with a stabilizing trend in new infections. The majority of deaths occurred among the elderly and those who have not received the vaccine. Therefore, it is recommended that the high-risk group, consisting of 608 individuals, get vaccinated against COVID-19. The Ministry of Public Health has promoted the vaccination campaign for COVID-19 along with the influenza vaccine to prevent both diseases during the upcoming rainy season.
- During the 2nd Occupational and Environmental Disease Control Committee meeting, held on May 3rd, 2023 a resolution was passed to include "Radiation-Induced Diseases" as a significant classification of diseases caused by occupational and environmental factors. This decision was made in response to the "Cesium-137" incident, along with the announcement of control and surveillance areas for maximum control in cases of PM 2.5 pollution. The decision was approved at the national level through the cabinet and received approval from the Bangkok and provincial committees. The Director-General of the Department of Disease Control issued an announcement to establish measures aimed at minimizing the future impact of such incidents.

CHOLERA DANGEROUS BUT PREVENTABLE

According to the Disease Surveillance Report from the Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health, for the 18th week (May 1-7, 2023), the second cholera case of the year was reported. The patient was a 9-year-old female of Burmese nationality residing in Ranong province. She had a history of consuming home-cooked food and drinking water from a well. Currently, her health is being closely monitored.

Data from the Division of Epidemiology over the past three years did not show any significant cholera outbreaks. However, there have been sporadic cases, with one case in 2021 and four in 2022, indicating a continuous presence of cholera. It is considered a significant public health problem for the country. Apart from the impact on public health, it also affects the overall economy due to its effect on the tourism industry and the export of food products. This disease can occur throughout the year, but it is more common during the hot season when the temperature rises and drought occurs, providing favorable conditions for the growth of the disease-causing bacteria. Factors such as consuming improperly cooked food, and inadequate hygiene practices contribute to the risk of contracting this disease. The symptoms of cholera, if not severe, usually resolve within one to five days, with frequent watery diarrhea. In adults, there may be abdominal pain and nausea. Severe cases may present with rice-water-like diarrhea without abdominal pain. Sometimes, the diarrhea can occur suddenly without warning and stop within 1 to 6 days if the individual receives adequate water and electrolyte replacement. However, if water and electrolyte replacement are not provided in a timely manner, severe dehydration can occur, accompanied by weakness, reduced urine output, or no urine output at all. There may be symptoms of lightheadedness, darkening of the face, and even shock, which can be life-threatening.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIALS

Public health officials should coordinate with local organizations to share information to the community about cholera, including its causes, symptoms, and prevention. They should advise on maintaining hygiene practices related to food and water consumption, emphasizing the importance of choosing fresh and clean food, and cooking it thoroughly. Additionally, they should recommend washing hands with soap before preparing and consuming food, as well as after using the restroom. There is also a focus on communicating with food establishments in the area to ensure the quality and hygiene standards of food preparation and service. Local authorities responsible for the management of drinking water are urged to ensure that residents have access to clean and standardized drinking water. People should follow the principles of "eat hot food, use a serving spoon, and wash your hands," which are fundamental guidelines provided by the Department of Disease Control for individuals to reduce the risk of cholera and other gastrointestinal diseases.

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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