

REPORT DISEASE AND HEALTH HAZARD NEWS OF INTEREST ALONG THE BORDER

May 18 - 24, 2023

WEEKLY EVENTS

- On May 18, 2023, the Laotian Times reported the opening of the Friendship Hospital between the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Vietnam in Chiang Khuang District, Laos. The hospital, with a capacity of 200 beds, began providing services on May 17.
- On May 20, 2023, the Ministry of Public Health organized a medical team, including doctors and medical personnel, to travel and provide healthcare to 12,000 Thai Muslims who were embarking on the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia. The medical team conducted health screenings and administered vaccines for COVID-19, influenza, and meningococcal meningitis. Travelers will undergo follow up and a 14-day monitoring period upon returning to Thailand.
- From May 23-24, 2023, the Department of Disease Control, in collaboration with international cooperation agencies, held an operational meeting to strengthen the health security network for disease surveillance, prevention, and control in the border areas. The meeting took place in Sangkhlaburi District, Kanchanaburi Province, with the participation of 70 individuals, including international migrant workers, village health volunteers, relevant personnel from provincial health offices, district health offices, and Sangkhlaburi Hospital. The objective was to enhance skills and basic knowledge in epidemiology, surveillance, and disease prevention and control, including health hazard awareness, monitoring abnormal events, and conducting preliminary disease investigations for migrant health workers in the area. Collaboration with village health volunteers and health agencies in the area was established to achieve seamless coordination.

WILD MUSHROOMS MAY BE POISONOUS - IF YOU DON'T KNOW, DON'T EAT THEM.

During the transition from the hot season into the rainy season, the weather allows various types of mushrooms to thrive, especially wild mushrooms in natural habitats. These mushrooms include both edible and poisonous varieties. When mushrooms are in the developing stage, they can appear very similar and hard to distinguish by the naked eye. This can lead to people mistakenly using poisonous mushrooms in their cooking.

According to the disease surveillance report from the Department of Disease Control for the 20th week (May 15-21, 2023), there have been nine reported cases of mushroom poisoning in the area of Dan Sai, Loei province. Among these cases, two individuals have died, and two are in critical condition requiring respiratory assistance. Preliminary investigations revealed that the patients consumed poisonous "ra-ngok" mushrooms, which are also called "ra-ngok-hin", "ra-ngok-ngak", or "ra-ngok-khai-tai" mushrooms. These mushrooms are toxic to the digestive and muscular systems, causing liver and kidney failure, which can be fatal.

There are other poisonous mushrooms that resemble edible mushrooms, in color or in the type of roots. There are also mushrooms that resemble "kohn" mushrooms but are not actually "kohn" mushrooms, which are inedible. Therefore, if you are unsure about the type of mushroom and whether it is poisonous, it is best not to consume it. Furthermore, due to the heat-resistant toxins present in poisonous mushrooms, even if they are cooked thoroughly, some toxins cannot be destroyed. Initial symptoms of consuming poisonous mushrooms can occur within 6-24 hours and include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, and stomach cramps. If more than 24 hours have passed, it can lead to liver or kidney failure and can be fatal.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIALS

Public health officials should coordinate migrant health volunteers to share information with the community on the dangers of consuming poisonous mushrooms, symptoms, and initial assistance. They should be educated to recognize the differences between poisonous mushrooms and edible mushrooms. If they are unsure, unfamiliar, or suspicious about whether a mushroom is poisonous, they should not collect or purchase it for cooking. Mushroom toxicity tests, such as boiling poisonous mushrooms with rice or shallots, can cause the rice or shallots to change color. Even dipping a spoon or a silver coin while boiling and seeing it turn black indicates the presence of toxins. However, this method cannot be used to test all mushrooms because they contain heat-resistant toxins that cannot be destroyed even when thoroughly cooked. If there are symptoms associated with consuming poisonous mushrooms, individuals should seek medical attention immediately and bring a sample of the consumed mushroom to aid in diagnosis and facilitate appropriate treatment.

INFORMATION COLLECTED AND ANALYZED BY

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

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