

REPORT DISEASE AND HEALTH HAZARD NEWS OF INTEREST ALONG THE BORDER

June 15 - 21, 2023

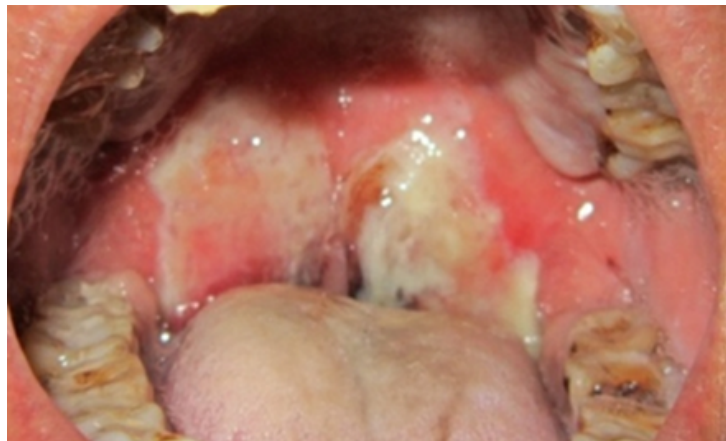
WEEKLY EVENTS

- From June 15-16, 2023, the Department of Disease Control, in collaboration with the Provincial Public Health Office of Nong Khai, organized a table-top exercise to respond to public health emergencies along the border area. The event (held in Nong Khai) aimed to enhance the capacity of personnel from various sectors in preparing for disease emergency response, as well as developing cooperation between Thailand and Lao PDR. The exercise focused on the comprehensive avian influenza preparedness plan and involved the advisory committee, disease control officials, and representatives from various agencies such as the Provincial Public Health Office, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labor, Department of Public Relations, Provincial Administrative Organization, Subdistrict Administrative Organization, Disease Control Department, Border Control Department, Immigration Police, volunteers, public health personnel, and civil society networks. Officials from the Lao PDR also participated in this exercise and coordination event.
- The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) delivered 150 refrigerators and 50 freezers to the Lao People's Democratic Republic for the storage of COVID-19 vaccines and other vaccines. These appliances will be distributed to health centers and vaccine storage facilities across the country. Additionally, USAID has also provided computers to the Ministry of Health of Laos to be used for data management and tracking the population vaccination records.

DIPHTHERIA: A SEVERE BUT PREVENTABLE DISEASE

Information from the Disease Surveillance Report, Department of Disease Control, Week 24 (12-18 June 2023), shows that there is a suspected case of diphtheria. The patient is a 17-year-old Thai female residing in Wapi Pathum District, Maha Sarakham Province. The case is currently under investigation. Meanwhile across the border, there have been continued reports of diphtheria.

Diphtheria is an acute infectious disease that affects the respiratory system. It is caused by a bacterium that produces toxins, leading to inflammation and muscle spasms in the respiratory tract. The disease is directly transmitted from person to person through coughing and sneezing. The bacteria can be found in nasal discharge, saliva, phlegm, and secretions of the infected individual. Indirect transmission can occur through the use of shared items with infected individuals. Cases are often detected in crowded communities or places such as childcare centers and refugee camps. The symptoms of diphtheria onset rapidly, with a typical incubation period of 2-5 days. The infected area will present with patches of gray or white tissue, especially on the throat wall and tonsils. If inflammation occurs, the tissue will become swollen and red. Common symptoms include fever, sore throat, headache, runny nose, and fatigue. In the case of nasal diphtheria, there may be nasal discharge mixed with blood, and the symptoms are generally less severe but persistent. Skin lesions with yellowish scales may develop on the skin surface and in the mouth. Common complications include acute rheumatic fever and inflammation of the brain nerves, which can be fatal. Receiving the diphtheria vaccination is crucial for prevention, as it can be administered from infancy to adulthood.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIALS

Public health officials should coordinate with the local administrative organizations to disseminate information to residents about the ongoing outbreak of diphtheria in Thailand and the region. The best preventive measure is to ensure that children aged 2 months and older receive the complete vaccination course according to the guidelines set by the Ministry of Public Health. Individuals traveling along the border or residing in areas with reported cases are advised to protect themselves by practicing proper hygiene measures and avoiding crowded areas. It is important to frequently wash hands, cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, and wear a mask to prevent the spread of the infection for those who are sick with respiratory diseases. Individuals who have not yet received the diphtheria vaccination can receive it at nearby public health service facilities.

INFORMATION COLLECTED AND ANALYZED BY

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

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