

REPORT DISEASE AND HEALTH HAZARD NEWS OF INTEREST ALONG THE BORDER

January 4 - 10, 2023

WEEKLY EVENTS

- On January 8, 2024, the Department of Disease Control reported that there is a decreasing trend in the number of influenza patients in Thailand but continuous cases have been reported. From January 1 to December 30, 2023, there were 472,222 reported cases and 29 deaths. The provinces with the highest incidence were, in descending order, Rayong, Phayao, Phuket, Bangkok, and Chiang Mai. The age group with the highest incidence was 5-9 years old, followed by 0-4 years old and 10-14 years old, respectively. The majority of cases occurred in densely populated urban areas, especially in tourist destinations. For the safety of tourists and to reduce the spread, the Ministry of Public Health has procured an additional 200,000 doses of influenza vaccine for public service providers and tourists. This includes transportation personnel such as taxi drivers and bus drivers, service personnel at accommodations such as hotel staff, homestays, apartments, and business operators of entertainment venues like pubs, bars, karaoke, restaurants, spas, or similar establishments. This initiative aims to enhance confidence in safety regarding the influenza outbreak in tourist areas, covering all 13 health regions nationwide.

PREVENTION IS CRUCIAL FOR ZIKA

Despite that Thailand has been in its winter season since November 14th, many areas are still experiencing hot weather. Any communities or residential areas that have environments with stagnant water within can become suitable breeding grounds for Aedes mosquitoes, which transmit various infectious diseases. The report from the 7th National Communicable Disease Committee meeting of 2023, indicated predictions for infectious diseases with high outbreak potential in 2024. The report mentioned three mosquito-borne diseases: dengue, chikungunya, and Zika. Data from the Department of Disease Control surveillance report for the 1st week (1-7 January 2024) indicated there were 12 Zika cases. Prachuap Khiri Khan province reported a cluster outbreak with 10 cases, while Surat Thani and Phetchaburi provinces each reported one case. Of the 12 patients, five were female, two of whom were pregnant.

Epidemiological analysis from the Division of Epidemiology, Department of Disease Control, showed a significant increase in Zika cases in 2023, with 758 reported cases, compared to 190 cases in 2022. In the past four weeks, the highest number of Zika virus cases was reported in Bangkok, with 40 cases, followed by Prachuap Khiri Khan province with 13 cases. Additionally, three cases were identified among German and Dutch tourists. It is known that the disease is not life-threatening and can resolve within seven days. The main form of care is symptomatic treatment. Pregnant women are particularly at risk, as infection during pregnancy can lead to severe complications in the newborn, such as microcephaly and developmental delays. The disease is transmitted by mosquitoes, so the best prevention is continuous elimination of mosquito breeding sites and protection against mosquito bites to reduce the risk of Zika virus infection.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIALS

Health agencies and local authorities should collaborate to inform residents about the current Zika situation, educating the public about the causes, symptoms, and basic self-protection measures. The Zika virus, transmitted by mosquitoes, is less severe than dengue fever and symptoms can resolve on their own. However, pregnant women should exercise extra caution as infection may lead to complications in the unborn child. The best preventive measure is to avoid mosquito bites by wearing sleeved clothing, using mosquito repellent, sleeping under a bed net, and maintaining well-ventilated living environments. Community members should work together to eliminate mosquito breeding grounds effectively and continuously in residential areas, schools, temples, and tourist accommodation facilities. This is particularly crucial to reduce the risk of Zika virus infection among both local residents and visitors.

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
Supported by the Thailand MOPH - US CDC Collaboration on Public Health

CONTACT
oic.ddc@gmail.com
02-5903832
www.ddc.go.th/oic

Sources

- <https://www.thairath.co.th/news/society/2753143>
- <https://www.hfocus.org/content/2024/01/29429>
- <https://www.pidst.or.th/A714.html>
- <https://ddc.moph.go.th/brc/news.php?news=39801&deptcode=>
- Image courtesy of: http://anubanngao.ac.th/gallery-detail_100518