

REPORT DISEASE AND HEALTH HAZARD NEWS OF INTEREST ALONG THE BORDER

July 11 - 17, 2024

WEEKLY EVENTS

- Data from the Disease Surveillance Report by the Department of Disease Control for Week 28 (July 8 - 14, 2024) indicated three deaths from melioidosis: two in Buriram Province and one in Chachoengsao Province. All had underlying conditions, specifically diabetes. According to the Disease and Health Hazard Surveillance Report by the Department of Disease Control for July 2024, as of June 29 there were 1,510 reported cases of melioidosis, with 39 fatalities. Most patients were aged 45 and above, with the highest number of cases reported in the northeastern region. Occupations at high risk for this disease include agriculture and jobs that involve frequent exposure to water and mud. Individuals with underlying conditions such as diabetes, chronic kidney failure, and compromised immune systems are at higher risk of death. It is expected that the number of cases will increase from July onwards, as the rainy season begins.
- The Ministry of Public Health has established the "Special Health Emergency Response Team" (SHERT) in the Provincial Health Offices of every province to address public health emergencies. These teams will monitor, conduct surveillance, and respond to situations 24/7, coordinating with local networks to prevent and mitigate health risks affecting the public during both normal and emergency situations. These emergencies can include infectious disease outbreaks, health hazards from chemicals, radiation, and nuclear incidents, health risks from natural and environmental factors, and incidents causing injuries and accidents. From January 1 to July 7, 2024, there were a total of 213 reported incidents in 60 provinces. These incidents included 48 cases of accidents and events related to ambulances, 43 cases of risks in public health facilities, 39 cases of accidents due to transportation, and 14 cases of diseases and health hazards from environmental factors.

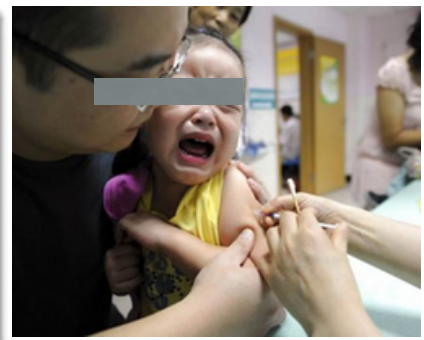
DIPHTHERIA:

A THREAT THAT CAN BE PREVENTED WITH VACCINATION

Data from the Department of Disease Control's Week 28 Surveillance Report (July 8 - 14, 2024) identified a diphtheria case involving a 43-year-old Cambodian woman living in Pluak Daeng District, Rayong Province. The case is currently under investigation. Data from the outbreak monitoring program from January 1 to July 17, 2024, indicated 23 suspected cases. Of these, one case was confirmed in the disease surveillance system. Reports of suspected diphtheria cases are received at a rate of about 1 to 5 events per month. The number of suspected diphtheria case reports has remained stable compared to the previous year, which had 12 suspected cases.

In Thailand, suspected diphtheria cases are reported year-round, predominantly between May and September, during the rainy season, and in all regions. Most patients are aged 1 - 8 years. According to the Medical and Health Data Warehouse of the Ministry of Public Health, the DTP3 vaccination coverage for children aged 1 year in 2023 was 88%, which is below the World Health Organization's target of at least 90% coverage. Diphtheria is transmitted directly from infected individuals through respiratory droplets from coughing or sneezing, as the bacteria are present in the mucus, saliva, phlegm, and secretions of the infected. Indirect transmission can occur through sharing utensils with an infected person. Cases are commonly found in community settings or crowded places, such as daycare centers and refugee camps.

The symptoms of diphtheria appear rapidly and acutely after an incubation period of about 2 - 5 days. The infected area will develop gray or white tissue, especially on the throat walls and around the tonsils. If inflamed, this gray tissue will swell and turn red. Common symptoms include fever, sore throat, headache, runny nose, and fatigue. Nasal diphtheria may present as bloody nasal discharge and tends to be mild but chronic. Complications often include myocarditis or cranial nerve inflammation, which can lead to paralysis and be fatal. Therefore, vaccination against diphtheria, which can be administered from infancy through adulthood, is crucial for disease prevention.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIALS

Village Health Volunteers (VHV) are coordinating with public health agencies to educate residents about diphtheria, which is still sporadically found in Thailand and border areas. Residents should be informed about the causes, symptoms, and prevention methods. The best prevention is to ensure that children aged 2 months and older receive the full course of diphtheria vaccination as per the Ministry of Public Health guidelines.

For those traveling to border areas or residing in places where cases have been reported, it is advised to protect themselves by maintaining proper hygiene, avoiding crowded places, washing hands frequently, and covering their mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing. Individuals with respiratory illnesses should wear masks to prevent spreading the infection. Anyone who has not yet been vaccinated against diphtheria can receive the vaccine at nearby public health facilities. Local public health officials should seek ways to increase the vaccination coverage for children aged 1 year to meet the World Health Organization's target of 90% coverage to prevent widespread outbreaks.

INFORMATION COLLECTED AND ANALYZED BY

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

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