

REPORT DISEASE AND HEALTH HAZARD NEWS OF INTEREST ALONG THE BORDER

August 1 - 7, 2024

WEEKLY EVENTS

- The Pediatric Infectious Disease Society of Thailand, in collaboration with the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration's Health Department, is promoting the health of Thai children and protecting them from COVID-19 through the "Building Immunity to Prevent COVID-19 in Young Children" campaign. The campaign encourages children aged 6 months to 4 years to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. The Pediatric Infectious Disease Society of Thailand has provided 3,000 vaccine doses, which will be delivered to the Bangkok Metropolitan Health Department by the end of August. These vaccines will be available to children in the specified age group at all 69 public health service centers in Bangkok. During the COVID-19 vaccination process, officials will educate the public and closely monitor for any adverse reactions after vaccination to ensure the children's safety and reduce parents' concerns.
- According to the Week 31 Event Surveillance Report (July 29 to August 4, 2024) the following noteworthy events were reported: A suspected case of diphtheria and one death due to the disease were identified. The deceased was an 11-year-old girl of Myanmar nationality, residing in Chumphon Province, with no history of vaccination. The suspected diphtheria case involves a 12-year-old boy of Myanmar nationality, residing in Tak Province, who was ordained as a novice monk at a local temple. Before falling ill, he had traveled back to Myanmar during March-April. Neither of the two cases had a history of receiving the diphtheria vaccine.
- Four deaths from influenza A have been reported. The first deceased was a 43-year-old Cambodian national residing in Surat Thani Province. The other three deceased were Thai nationals: a 9-year-old girl in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province, a 38-year-old man in Samut Prakan Province, and a 73-year-old man in Pathum Thani Province. All four individuals had underlying health conditions and no history of receiving the influenza vaccine.

AVIAN INFLUENZA IN CAMBODIA: BE AWARE BUT NOT ALARMED

The Ministry of Health of the Kingdom of Cambodia confirmed, through the National Public Health Institute and the Institut Pasteur, that two cases of H5N1 avian influenza were detected between July 30 and August 3, 2024. Both patients reside in Svay Rieng Province. The first patient, a 4-year-old boy, lives in Romeas Haek District, and the second patient, a 16-year-old girl, lives in Chantrea District. Both patients presented with similar symptoms, including fever, cough, difficulty breathing, and lethargy. They were hospitalized and are now in stable condition. The risk factor for both patients was the presence of ducks and chickens in their villages, which were later found dead from unknown causes. The patients regularly played with these ducks and chickens. With these two new cases, the total number of avian influenza cases in Cambodia this year has risen to nine, with one fatality.

Currently, national and regional public health emergency response teams from the Ministry of Health are collaborating with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries, the Ministry of Environment, and local agencies at all levels to identify suspected cases and distribute antiviral medication to close contacts to prevent further spread of the virus.

In Thailand, no avian influenza cases have been reported since 2006. However, the Ministry of Public Health has established a comprehensive management system in the event of an avian influenza outbreak, including a surveillance system in hospitals that meets international standards. A risk for an outbreak in Thailand is the illegal importation of poultry across borders. For land border international communicable disease control points, surveillance efforts have been heightened in collaboration with other agencies, such as the Customs Department, Animal Quarantine Stations, and Communicable Disease Control Stations that monitor travelers entering the country. Initial screening measures, such as temperature checks, symptom observation, and risk history inquiries (e.g., close contact with poultry), are in place. If a traveler is deemed at risk, officials will immediately collect samples for testing and categorize them as a suspected case for further monitoring. Travelers arriving from countries with avian influenza outbreaks or the general public at risk are advised to monitor their health. If they develop a fever or respiratory symptoms such as a sore throat or runny nose, they should seek medical attention for immediate diagnosis and treatment, providing detailed information about their risk history, such as recent travel to outbreak areas or close contact with poultry. This information will be crucial for physicians in making an accurate diagnosis and providing appropriate treatment.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIALS

Officials have instructed the Village Health Volunteers (VHVs) to coordinate with local public health and livestock officials to inform residents about the avian influenza situation in Cambodia, where the disease has been associated with contact with dead poultry. If residents notice any abnormalities in their area, such as poultry becoming ill or dying from an unknown cause, they should report it to the village head, VHVs, or district livestock officers. Poultry that have died from unknown causes should not be consumed, and the carcasses should be buried. Additionally, proper personal hygiene, such as eating well-cooked food, wearing face masks, and washing hands before meals, can help prevent the spread of disease.

Given the current influenza outbreak, if there are any cases in the area with flu-like symptoms and a history of contact with poultry, living in close proximity to poultry, or being near areas where poultry have died unexpectedly within the past 7-14 days before becoming ill, it should be reported to local public health and livestock officials. Healthcare personnel who encounter patients with influenza should inquire about the patient's risk history as mentioned above. If the symptoms match the case definition, they should promptly report it through the designated surveillance channels.

INFORMATION COLLECTED AND ANALYZED BY

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

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Sources

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