

REPORT DISEASE AND HEALTH HAZARD NEWS OF INTEREST ALONG THE BORDER

August 22 - 28, 2024

WEEKLY EVENTS

- Data from the Week 34 Surveillance Report of the Department of Disease Control (August 12 - 18) identified a cluster of suspected diphtheria cases. There were two cases: the first was a 9-year-old male of Myanmar nationality, residing in Mae Tha Subdistrict, Mae Sot District, Tak Province. He had no history of vaccination and presented with symptoms of fever, cough, difficulty breathing, and swollen tonsils with a white membrane. The disease investigation found eight contacts, with one additional symptomatic individual, a relative living in the same household, who had not completed the required vaccination schedule. The laboratory confirmation is pending. The vaccine coverage in Mae Tha Subdistrict for DTP3 and DTP4 was 85.56%, and for DTP5, it was 71.82%, which is below the World Health Organization's recommended threshold of 90%.
- On August 20, 2024, the Ministry of Health of the Kingdom of Cambodia announced a confirmed report from the National Institute of Public Health and the Pasteur Institute, indicating an additional death due to H5N1 avian influenza within the past three weeks. This marks the second death from the virus in 2024. With these two fatalities, Cambodia has recorded a total of 10 cases of avian influenza this year. The most recent death was a 15-year-old female residing in Prey Veng Province. An investigation in the village revealed a large number of dead chickens. The deceased had fallen ill five days prior to her death after handling a dead chicken to prepare food. Relevant authorities are currently investigating the disease and tracing the source of infection in both animals and humans, as well as identifying additional contacts and suspected cases to prevent further spread in the community. Tamiflu has been distributed to close contacts, and a health education campaign is being conducted to inform the villagers.

THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH WARNS ABOUT DISEASES AND HAZARDS ASSOCIATED WITH FLOODS

Recently, the monsoon trough has passed over northern Thailand, leading to heavy rainfall, flash floods, and landslides in several northern provinces. The Department of Disease Control has instructed relevant agencies, including the Division of Epidemiology, the Communicable Diseases Division, the Division of Disease Control and Health Hazards in Emergencies, and the 12 Disease Control Offices nationwide, to prepare emergency response plans and monitor the potential disease outbreaks and health hazards during the floods. According to the surveillance data from the Division of Epidemiology from January 1 to August 21, 2024, the five diseases with the highest number of cases were influenza, pneumonia, food poisoning, dengue fever, and hand, foot, and mouth disease. Outbreaks of these diseases are reported annually. Other diseases that tend to increase during the rainy season or floods include leptospirosis, with 2,267 cumulative cases and 29 deaths; melioidosis, with 2,210 cumulative cases and 65 deaths; and conjunctivitis, with 72,775 cumulative cases and no reported deaths.

The Department of Disease Control urges residents in flood-prone and affected areas to stay alert, follow official updates, and always be prepared. Besides the common communicable diseases during floods, there are other health hazards to be aware of, such as bites or stings from venomous animals like snakes, scorpions, and centipedes, as well as accidents from driving vehicles through flooded areas, being swept away by strong currents, and drowning.

The Ministry of Public Health has prepared and implemented response plans, conducted drills, and emphasized the following five key measures to relevant agencies: Provinces in surveillance and water-receiving areas should consider opening Emergency Medical and Public Health Operations Centers to monitor the situation, assess impacts, and continuously report to the Emergency Public Health Division. Monitoring and surveillance of the situation should be focused particularly on provinces with dams, reservoirs, or rivers that may overflow or where flood barriers may break. In the event of significant emergencies, the Provincial Public Health Office should report to the Emergency Public Health Division. Surveillance of flood-related diseases and health hazards, such as leptospirosis, conjunctivitis, and dengue fever, should be conducted, along with maintaining the hygiene of the people in temporary shelters, while ensuring the safety of medical and public health personnel on duty. Additionally, medical and public health services should be provided during the floods, and impact assessments should be conducted for further recovery efforts.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIALS

Officials have instructed village health volunteers to coordinate with public health officers to address the flood situation, particularly in the affected provinces, by informing the public about ways to prevent diseases and health hazards. For example, avoid dumping garbage or waste into the water, do not allow young children to play in the water unattended as they may drown or be bitten by venomous animals, and if dirty water splashes into your eyes, immediately wash your face and eyes with clean water. Only eat food that is cooked, hot, and clean. If you must walk through floodwaters or muddy areas, always wear boots and clean your body with soap and clean water immediately afterward.

To prevent drowning, adhere to the '4 Don'ts, 4 Do's' principle. The 4 Don'ts include: don't fish in areas with stagnant floodwater, especially during high water flow; don't drink alcohol and then go into or play in the water; don't walk through or drive across flooded currents; and don't let children play in the water. The 4 Do's include: evacuate to higher ground; leave the area immediately in case of flooding; wear a life jacket or carry floating equipment with you; travel in groups to help each other in emergencies; and closely follow weather updates and warnings from the Meteorological Department.

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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