

REPORT DISEASE AND HEALTH HAZARD NEWS OF INTEREST ALONG THE BORDER

December 19 - 25, 2024

WEEKLY EVENTS

- On December 16, 2024 the Ministry of Public Health prepared measures to ensure the well-being of citizens during the New Year 2025 celebrations under the theme "Travel Safely, Stay Healthy." A medical and public health operations center has been established to support staff 24/7. Health volunteers nationwide have been instructed to work with administrative officials, local government organizations, village heads, and public health officers at community checkpoints. These efforts include public announcements within villages and communities to discourage drinking and driving. Screening for intoxication will be conducted at community checkpoints to prevent impaired drivers from entering main roads. Proactive measures have also been implemented, with health volunteers and local officials visiting households hosting social gatherings to remind individuals not to drink and drive. Additionally, the capabilities of health volunteers have been enhanced through training in first aid and basic life support (CPR). This enables them to provide proper assistance to road accident victims before safely transferring them to medical professionals, ultimately reducing fatalities and severe injuries.
- The ASEAN Biodiaspora Virtual Center from December 21-23, 2024 reported a measles outbreak in Hanoi and other northern provinces of Vietnam. The Hanoi Center for Disease Control detected 44 measles cases last week, an increase of 19 cases from the previous week. This marks a rise compared to the same period in 2023. During the first 11 months of this year, a total of 87 cases were reported, with no fatalities. The number of cases continues to rise, predominantly among individuals who are either unvaccinated or have not received the full vaccination series. Meanwhile, Cambodia is also experiencing a measles outbreak. The Cambodian Ministry of Health reported a continuous increase in measles cases, particularly in schools and certain border provinces. From January to December 2024, 375 cases were confirmed across 17 provinces. Authorities have urged parents to vaccinate their children aged 9 months to 5 years against measles and rubella free of charge at all health centers to prevent further spread of the disease.

AS CHOLERA SPREADS IN MYANMAR, PROPER HYGIENE IS EMPHASIZED FOR PREVENTION

The Weekly Event Surveillance Report (Week 51, December 16-22, 2024) of the Department of Disease Control highlighted an outbreak of suspected cholera Shwe Kokko, Myawaddy District, Karen State, Myanmar. A total of 300 cases were reported, with 56 patients requiring hospitalization at Shwe Kokko Hospital, and 2 fatalities recorded. Laboratory tests confirmed the presence of cholera bacteria. The outbreak site borders Thailand's Mae Sot and Mae Ramat districts. Subsequently, two patients from Mae Sot were hospitalized at Mae Sot Hospital, where laboratory tests also confirmed cholera. The situation is currently under investigation.

Preliminary measures include alerts from the Tak Provincial Public Health Office to all districts, particularly the five border districts, to monitor the situation and educate the public. Information campaigns are being disseminated through health agencies and related media outlets. Mae Ramat and Mae Sot districts in Tak Province are considered high-risk areas due to their proximity to Shwe Kokko. The presence of industrial factories and large populations of migrant workers and Myanmar nationals further increases vulnerability. The New Year festival, with its gatherings and shared meals, adds to the risk. On December 22, the Ministry of Public Health proposed the activation of the emergency operations center in Tak Province to enhance preparedness. It is expected that the outbreak in Myanmar will persist for some time.

Health authorities have been instructed to intensify diarrhea surveillance along the border. The Ministry of Public Health is ready to support investigation teams and provide guidance for disease prevention and control on the Myanmar side to reduce the risk of cross-border spread. Proactive measures will include educating Myanmar nationals about disease prevention, monitoring Thai patients presenting with symptoms of diarrhea or dysentery, strengthening active surveillance in high-risk areas such as border communities, factories, and temporary shelters. The emergency operations center is also tasked with assessing supplies of essential medicines and equipment, including drugs, saline solutions, chlorine, and rapid fecal testing kits. Requests for additional resources will be supported if current supplies are insufficient.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIALS

Health volunteers should coordinate with public health officials and local authorities to raise awareness of the cholera outbreak in Myanmar, particularly in provinces bordering the country. Educational efforts include providing information about cholera, its causes, symptoms, and prevention. Residents are advised to maintain proper food and water hygiene by avoiding leftover meals, washing hands with soap and water before cooking, eating, and after using the toilet. Restaurant operators are urged to strictly adhere to food quality and cleanliness standards in line with the Department of Disease Control's recommendations. Community leaders, health volunteers, schools with Myanmar students who cross the border, and related networks are emphasized to follow the "Eat hot food, use a serving spoon, and wash hands" principle for food consumption. Agencies responsible for producing water for consumption, such as local water utilities, are instructed to ensure chlorine levels meet the standard of at least 0.2 milligrams per liter. Ice production facilities must be regularly inspected to ensure consistent quality. If anyone in the community exhibits symptoms of diarrhea, they should seek medical attention immediately. These measures aim not only to reduce the risk of cholera but also to mitigate the risk of other gastrointestinal diseases.

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