



The Coronavirus Disease 2019 News release

by Emergency Operations Center, Department of Disease Control

Special Announcement of COVID-19 On 17 May 2020

Regarding today's COVID-19 situation in Thailand, three new COVID-19 cases were confirmed among people who returned from Pakistan and Egypt, and they are under state quarantine (under observation in the quarantine area). One case recovered and was discharged (a total of 2,856 cases have recovered or 94.31% of the total number of the confirmed cases) and 116 were being treated in hospitals (3.83% of the total number of confirmed cases). Currently, the total number of cases increased to 3,028. There were no reports of deaths, so the total number of deaths remained at 56 cases.

Today (17 May 2020) at the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) Nonthaburi, Dr. Anupong Sujariyakul, senior expert from the Department of Disease Control and Dr. Bancha Khakhong, Deputy Director of the Department of Health together stated that the COVID-19 situation in Thailand is getting better and the government has begun the 2nd phase of relaxing the restrictions, effectively taking a step towards bringing people back to normal life. However, the MOPH still asked for cooperation from the general public to follow the prevention measures. The 2nd phase includes self-screening, going out of the residence only for short periods, using health services in the standard hospitals, wearing a face mask, frequently washing your hands with soap and water or alcohol gel, and following the instructions from other enterprises/businesses.

For the new normal in the enterprises and businesses, they must make use of booking appointments, providing waiting areas, providing a screening and hand cleaning spot, rearranging spaces in services areas, frequently cleaning the areas and contacted areas, providing good ventilation, refraining from selling alcohol, and limiting time of services to prevent the second waves of outbreak.

Nevertheless, caring for the health of family members is important, especially for members who leave the residence and represent a risk of spreading the disease in the family. They must strictly implement the protection measures including wearing a face mask/cloth mask, frequently washing hands with soap or alcohol gel, keeping 1-2 meters of space between each other, separating dishes and meals from others, and avoiding rush hour on public transportation and crowded places, If you have a fever, cough, runny nose, shortness of breath, or muscle pain, you must seek medical attention at a hospital and provide correct travel history to the healthcare workers.

The Ministry of Public Health together with the Office of International Health Policy Development National Health Security Office, National Statistical Office, Faculty of Medicine Siriraj Hospital, and Faculty of Medicine, Ramathibodi Hospital Mahidol University surveyed the COVID-19 prevention behaviors before and after phase 1 of relaxing the mitigation measures (23-30 April and 8-14 May respectively). They found that the general public decreased their practice of self-protective behaviors from 77.6 percent to 72.5 percent.

Furthermore, people wearing face masks 100% of the time decreased from 91.2% to 91.0%, washing hands with soap or using alcohol gel every time decreased from 87.2% to 83.4%, having cooked, hot food and using their own spoon every time decreased from 86.1% to 82.3%, social distancing at least 2 meters decreased from 65.3% to 60.7%, and not touching the face, nose, mouth every time decreased from 62.9% to 52.9%. The MOPH is concerned and asked people to strictly follow the prevention measures and not to be careless.