

# Department of Disease Control Weekly Disease Forecast No.168\_Influenza (15 - 21 July 2018)

According to the national disease surveillance system, the Department of Disease Control revealed 65,287 influenza patients (9 deaths) during 1 January – 9 July 2018. Provinces with the top five influenza incidence rates (cases per 100,000 population) were Chiangmai, Bangkok, Phayao, Rayong and Uttaradit respectively. Outbreaks occurred in crowded places such as schools, prisons, military camps and temples.

The total number of influenza patients of this year is lower than that of last year at the same time period. However, it is still higher than the median of the past five years.



According to this week disease forecast, influenza will continue to occur during this rainy season which is also usually the disease peak period.

The Department of Disease Control therefore advises people to protect themselves well from the disease especially persons who are the most at risk of having severe influenza including 1) pregnant women with 4 months of pregnancy onwards, 2) children aged 6 months to 2 years old, 3) people with underlying chronic diseases (COPD, asthma, heart disease, brain vascular diseases, kidney failure, cancer patients under chemotherapy, and diabetes), 4) people older than 65 years, 5) mentally disabled people 6) thalassemia people and people with impaired immunity (including HIV infected persons with symptoms), and 7) obese people weigh 100 kilograms and over or have Mass Body Index (BMI) over 35 kg/m<sup>2</sup>. These most at risk people should get the annual influenza vaccine to protect them from the disease as well as to reduce the disease severity and chance to be admitted to hospital. Advice related to influenza vaccine is available from all hospitals near by.

For queries or additional information, please call DDC hotline 1422.



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- In case of having suspect symptoms of influenza, one should wear a face mask to prevent the spread of the disease. All patients should wear face masks and wash hands often to help prevent spread of influenza virus to others. The patients with symptoms of coughing, sneezing, runny nose, should wear face masks and wash hands often to help prevent the spread of influenza virus to others. For those who take medicines to relieve influenza symptoms but do not feel better within 2 - 3 days, it is wise to seek a medical care at a hospital nearby immediately.
- School, work place, military camp and prison should screen people for influenza-like illness (ILI). People with flu symptoms should be absent or isolated to prevent spreading of influenza virus to others.
- The Department of Disease Control recommends that schools run screenings for sick students. If a student has symptoms of influenza such as fever, cough, and sore throat, he or she should wear a face mask and be isolated in the first aid room. The parents should then be contacted and advised to pick up the child for home or hospital care.
- All schools should encourage students and staff to take everyday preventive actions against influenza through provision of hand washing areas with soap and water. Face masks should be available in school first aid rooms.