

REPORT DISEASE AND HEALTH HAZARD NEWS OF INTEREST ALONG THE BORDER

October 6 - 12, 2022

WEEKLY EVENTS

- On October 11, 2022 the Matchon Publishing House reported that according to the news of the Food Authority of Singapore, four Mie Sedaap instant noodle products produced in Indonesia were recalled due to ethylene oxide pesticide contamination. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) reviewed the license information, stating that six Mie Sedaap products are imported and sold in Thailand. The FDA has issued a letter to food distributors to request cooperation in removing the products from shelves and suspending sales.
- From October 31 to November 4, 2022, the Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health, alongside the other 18 ministries are preparing for the International Health Regulations-Joint External Evaluation (IHR-JEE) for foreign experts and the World Health organization to assess Thailand's capacities in prevention, detection, and response to public health risks. The updated assessment includes new topics such as gender equality in public health emergencies, infection prevention and control, community involvement and border health.

BE CAREFUL OF FUNGAL INFECTIONS WHEN ENTERING CAVES OR TREE HOLLOWES

The Department of Disease Control has warned people to be careful when entering caves or tree hollows due to the risk of a fungal infection in the lungs called histoplasmosis. The DDC reported that a group of 10 people recently went on a nature education expedition to observe bats. During the expedition, they entered a large tree hollow in a forest for a short period of time. After 2-3 weeks, seven out of the 10 people had symptoms of coughing and fatigue. Chest X-rays revealed spots of different sizes scattered throughout their lungs. Lung biopsy results confirmed the presence of the fungus that causes histoplasmosis.

This fungus is generally present in the environment or soil but there are higher concentrations of the pathogen in bat excrement. Tree hollows and caves are often the habitats of bats and are closed-systems with limited ventilation. Therefore, there can be high concentrations of inhaled pathogens within these habitats even during a short period of exposure time. Normally, if the infected person is in good physical health, they can recover on their own within one month. Immunocompromised individuals such as the elderly or people with underlying disease, may develop symptoms more easily when infected. Symptoms of histoplasmosis are similar to those of pneumonia: fever, cough, difficulty breathing, chest pain, fatigue, chills, headache, muscle aches, and weight loss. In severe cases, patients may cough up blood or reach respiratory failure, which can eventually lead to death.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIALS

Public health officers should inform their communities on the causes of the disease, symptoms and methods of prevention. People should avoid entering caves or hollows of large trees, which may be bat habitats. If it is necessary to enter these places, N95 masks should be worn and people should limit their time in these spaces. After exiting, people should wash their hands and change their clothes. Other activities that are risk factors include cleaning bat kennels/cages and exposure to dusty storage houses that may have housed bats. If you have any symptoms, you should see your doctor immediately and provide your travel history.

INFORMATION COLLECTED AND ANALYZED BY

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

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