

Influenza creates havoc in northeast Thailand

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Singapore: A seasonal flu is multiplying in large numbers in the lower northeast region of Thailand almost doubling this year. Statistics show a 50 percent increase in spread with almost 2,000 people contracting the disease this year, as compared to 987 people last year.

The flu claimed seven lives as confirmed by the head of Office of Disease Prevention and Control. Dr Theerawat Walaisathien, director of Disease Prevention Control in Nakhon Ratchasima said, "Influenza played havoc spreading in Nakhon Ratchasima, Chaiyaphum, Buri Ram and Surin provinces."

Nakhon Ratchasima, the worst hit, reported 1,278 cases and seven deaths while cases in huge numbers were also reported from Chaiyaphum, Buri Ram and Surin.

Dr Walaisathein noted that influenza spread in huge numbers this year and cited the probable cause as climatic changes and weather fluctuations early in the year.

Dr Walaisathein said that government has undertaken measures to make influenza vaccine available even to the remotest villages and vaccination is expected to be completed by this July. He cautioned that young people and children were at high risk and necessary precautionary measures need to be followed to curb the expanded spread.