

Youngsters who ate meat from rabid dog being monitored

THE NATION

TWELVE youngsters in Mukdahan in the far Northeast are being monitored after they dug up the carcass of a rabid dog then cooked and ate its meat.

The Department of Disease Control head Jedsada Chokdamrongsuk said the youngsters made grilled and steamed dishes, plus "larb" – the spicy Isaan-style minced salad involving half-cooked meat and raw blood – before eating them.

At a request of the local village head, the local branch of the Department of Livestock Development had the dog's head examined and found that the animal had died from rabies.

The director-general said the department's surveillance and rapid response team (SRRT) had located the 12 youngsters involved and had them vaccinated at Mukdahan's provincial hospital before putting them under close watch.

"The SRRT will be closely monitoring the people exposed to the disease," Jedsada said.

He warned people to avoid contact with dogs that are potentially infected with the potentially fatal disease.

Eight rabies deaths this year

There have been reports of four dogs found with rabies in Mukdahan over the last three years – one each in 2014 and 2015 and two this year, according to Jedsada.

However, there has been no report of rabies-related deaths since 2009.

Earlier this year, a rabies patient from Laos received treatment at Mukdahan hospital but later succumbed to complications.

Across the country, eight people have died from the disease this year – two in Chachoengsao and one each in Tak, Rayong, Sa Kaew, Samut Prakan, Songkhla and Si Sa Ket, according to Jedsada.

The number is comparatively higher than those over the past five years, he said.

According to the World Health Organisation, dogs are the source of the vast majority of human rabies deaths, contributing up to 99 per cent of all rabies transmissions to humans.

Infection causes tens of thousands of deaths every year, mostly in Asia and Africa.

Immediate cleaning of a wound with soap and water after contact with a suspect rabid animal can be life-saving.