

# Information bulletin



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

## Viet Nam: Hand, foot and mouth disease

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**This bulletin is being issued for information only and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. IFRC is not presently seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation. The Viet Nam Red Cross Society will, however, accept direct assistance to provide support to the affected population.**

Cases of hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD) continue to be reported in 49 provinces in Viet Nam. Updated as of 1 August, about 25,918 cases and 74 deaths have been reported to the Ministry of Health. Children under five years of age are the most vulnerable. Big cities are among the most affected areas and the Ministry of Health is leading public health interventions to reduce infection and deaths.

As a member of the National Steering Committee on Infectious Diseases and Pandemics, Viet Nam Red Cross has participated in regular coordination meetings with the Ministry of Health to keep a close watch on the situation. In July, guidance to reduce risks of HFMD was provided by Viet Nam Red Cross to members, staff and volunteers in all 63 provinces. At the provincial, district and commune levels, Red Cross staff

and volunteers have also helped strengthen health education to the general public while engaging with organizations in health and other related sectors in efforts to limit the spread and impact of HFMD.



**A Red Cross volunteer distributes leaflets on hand, foot and mouth disease to the family of an infected child in Hochiminh City. (Source: Vietnam Marine Times online, 28 July 2011)**

[<view the map of the affected area, or contact information>](#)

## The situation

In April, higher than normal incidence of HFMD has been noted in a number of provinces in southern Viet Nam. The sharp increase in the reported cases was noted in June and has continued in July. As of 1 August, the total number of cases has already reached 25,918, which is 2.5 times the total number of cases recorded in 2010. The total number of deaths recorded as of 1 August also reached 74, which is 12 times higher compared to 2010, and three times higher compared to 2009. Of the cases to date, 97 per cent are children aged five years and below, with 67 per cent between one and two years old.

Reported in Viet Nam since 2003, HFMD is a common viral infection among infants and young children which can cause fever and blister-like eruptions in the mouth, on the palm of the hands and soles of the feet. It can also cause severe disease and sometimes results in death. HFMD can be transmitted through direct contact with the virus found in the nose and throat secretions, saliva, blister fluid and stool of infected

persons. There is no specific preventive measure for HFMD; hence, good hygiene practices are important in lowering the risk of infection.

HFMD is reported to be spreading in 49 provinces since the beginning of the year. In the last week alone, 39 provinces have reported having 2,139 new cases of infection and four deaths. As Southern provinces are among the most affected by HFMD, Hochiminh City, Dongnai, Dongthap, Binhduong, Tiengiang, and Bentre, among other, are among the provinces with highest infection rates.

About ten preschools in Hochiminh closed in July in an attempt to stem outbreaks. Further care is being taken in the dispensing of preventive medication after an unfortunate incident on 29 July where about 50 kindergarten children in Binhduong were hospitalized due to mistaken prescriptions of chloramines-B, intended for school disinfection to prevent HFMD.

The government's response to the disease has been increased since May 2011 with intensified surveillance and monitoring. The situation of HFMD is updated regularly at weekly National Steering Committee meetings on infectious diseases. New guidance on surveillance, diagnosis and treatment of HFMD has been developed and provided by the Ministry of Health. Up to 41 training courses on monitoring and prevention of HFMD and eight review meetings on disease prevention and control were organized in 17 provinces.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Based on experience, materials and capacity built on very recent influenza pandemic preparedness and community-based health and first aid programmes, Viet Nam Red Cross has continued its cooperation and complementary role in public health.

Through steering committees, it has identified areas where it can contribute to prevention and control efforts. It has started to mobilize staff and volunteers as educators to disseminate messages to the general public, focusing on measures to prevent transmission and promote early detection. Selected chapters including Hochiminh, Dongnam and others are also active in joining efforts with the health sector in providing education to schools and households on HFMD prevention and control.

The response team for infectious disease is also active at national headquarters in keeping close watch on the situation and preparing for more intensified response.

### How we work

***All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations \(NGOs\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.***

IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

IFRC's work is guided by [Strategy 2020](#) which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of nonviolence and peace.

### Contact information

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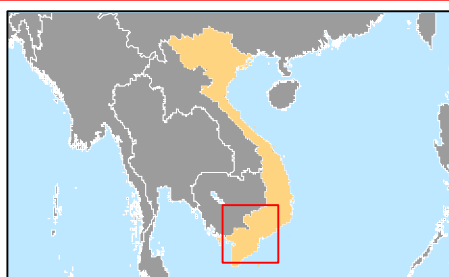
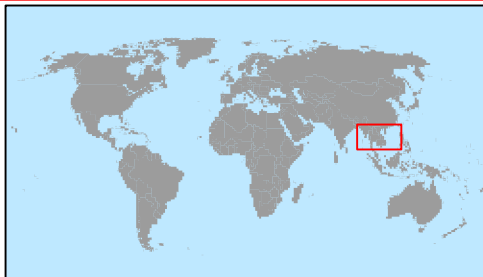
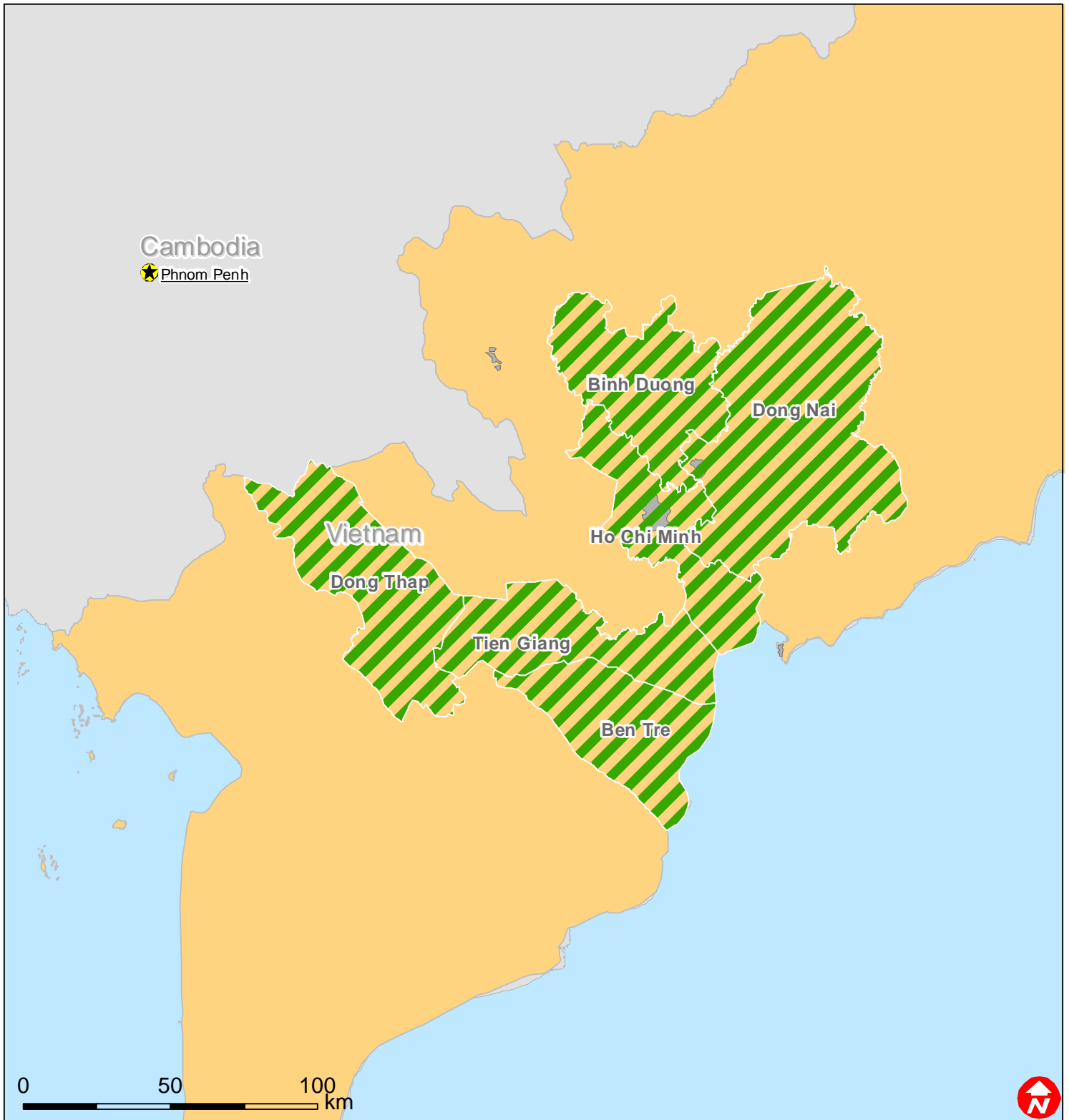
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**[<map below; click here to return to the title page>](#)**



# Vietnam: Epidemic



 Most affected districts