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சுவசிரிபாய  
SUWASIRIPAYA

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☎ திகதி ) 23 .09.2020  
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சுகாதார அமைச்சு  
Ministry of Health

General Circular: 01/39/2020

All Provincial Chief Secretaries/Provincial Health Secretaries,  
Provincial / Regional Directors of Health Services,  
Directors of Teaching Hospitals/ Provincial General Hospitals/  
District General Hospitals  
Medical Superintendents of Base Hospitals and  
Heads of Institutions.

NATIONAL POISON PREVENTION WEEK -- 19<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> OF OCTOBER 2020

*“Bites and Stings of Venomous Animals and first aid ”*

National Poisons Centre has been annually conducting the poison prevention week over the past few years in collaboration with the Ministry of Health. This program creates awareness regarding prevention and management of poisoning in the general public and the health staff. This initiative is following a decision taken in 2007 by National Committee for Prevention of Injury.

According to the National Health Statistics, at present snake bites are the commonest cause for hospital admissions among the reported venomous animal bites and stings in Sri Lanka.

In addition, a large number of arthropod bites and stings are common environmental hazards. These include bees, wasps, hornets, scorpions, centipedes and spiders. The majority of the cases are reported from Nuwara-Eliya, Kandy, Polonnaruwa, Vavuniya and Anuradhapura districts. Recently a significant number of deaths have been reported from the Jaffna Peninsula due to white scorpion (*Hottentotta tumulus*) bites. However accurate data of these animal bites and stings in Sri Lanka are not readily available.

In addition, sea animal envenomation have been reported from the coastal areas of Jaffna, Puttalam, Galle and Colombo districts.

Considering this the National Poisons Information Center has decided to conduct the poison prevention week this year under the following theme in order to minimize hospital admissions and deaths due to venomous animal bites and stings.

The objective of this circular is to improve the awareness in the public through the health institutions during the National Poison Prevention Week.

**Theme :** "Bites and Stings of Venomous Animals and first aid "

**Scheduled dates:** 19<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> October 2020

**Objectives:**

1. Minimize hospitalizations and deaths due to venomous animal bites and stings
2. Educate the general public regarding and methods of minimizing venomous animal bites and stings

**The Proposed Activities:**

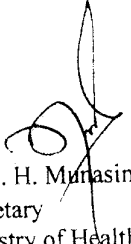
Preparing programs to educate the staff and general public at institutional level.

01. Conducting lectures and exhibitions
02. Distribution of handouts and posters

You may seek further information and technical support from the National Poisons Information Centre located at the National Hospital of Sri Lanka Colombo (Tel: 011-2636143/011-2691111 ext. 2431) who will be coordinating this activity.

Please bring this circular to the notice of all members of the staff and ensure that the above measures are implemented. At least one relevant program is expected to be carried out by each health institution.

The report of activities conducted in your respective institution should be forwarded to the Director, Non Communicable Disease, Ministry of Health, before 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

  
Dr. S. H. Munasinghe  
Secretary  
Ministry of Health

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