

NIPAH Virus Disease- Information for General Public

What is Nipah?

Nipah is a virus which commonly affects animals like bats, pigs, dogs, horses, etc. The virus can spread from animals to humans and can sometimes cause serious illness among humans.

How does it spread?

- Spread of Nipah virus to humans may occur after close contact with other Nipah infected people, infected bats, or infected pigs. Bat secretions laden with virus can infect people during fruit tree climbing, eating/handling contaminated fallen fruits or consuming raw date palm sap/juice or toddy.
- Human to Human infection can occur from close contact with persons affected with Nipah at home while providing care or close contact and in hospital setting if; appropriate personal protective equipments are not used.
- Handling of dead bodies, suspected of death due to Nipah virus should be done in accordance with the government advisory. During this emotional moment traditional rituals and practices may need to be modified to prevent the exposure of family members to the disease.

Who are at high risk of developing Nipah virus infection?

- People who are exposed to areas inhabited by fruit bats/ articles contaminated by secretions such as, unused wells, caves, fruit orchards, etc are likely to be at higher risk of infection
- Persons with direct contact with sick pigs or their contaminated tissues
- Persons in close contact with a Nipah virus affected deceased during burial or cremation rituals
- Health care workers having direct contact with probable or confirmed cases without using standard precautionary measures

What measures of prevention should be taken in high risk areas?

- Wash hands with soap and water after coming in contact with a sick person or animal
- Avoid consuming raw date palm sap or toddy
- Consume only washed fruits
- Avoid consuming half eaten fruits from the ground
- Avoid entering into abandoned wells
- Handling of dead bodies should be done in accordance with the government advisory

What is the common presentation of the Nipah Virus Disease?

- The illness commonly presents as brain fever. In some cases during early part of illness it may also present with fever with persistent cough and difficulty in breathing.