

**What is Nipah virus?**

Nipah virus is a virus transmitted to humans by animals. The virus was identified in 1999 after causing disease in animals and in humans. The virus is named after the location where it was first detected in Malaysia.

**Who is at risk for Nipah virus?**

People of all ages are at risk for Nipah virus in locations in Asia where the virus is active in local animal populations. In Malaysia and Singapore, infection has been associated with close contact with infected pigs. In Bangladesh and India, infection has been associated with close contact with bats and consumption of raw date palm sap, a source of food for the local bat populations.

**What are the symptoms of Nipah virus?**

Illness with Nipah virus begins with fever and headache followed by inflammation of the brain (encephalitis), drowsiness and disorientation characterized by mental confusion. About half of cases also experience respiratory symptoms early on. These signs and symptoms can progress to coma within 24 to 48 hours. Forty percent of hospitalized cases have died. Serious nervous disease with Nipah virus encephalitis has been shown to cause long term illness in some patients that survive, including persistent convulsions and personality changes.

**How soon do symptoms appear?**

Symptoms usually appear five to 14 days after exposure to the virus.

**How is Nipah virus spread?**

Transmission has occurred in humans through direct contact with infected bats, pigs, horses, infected tissues and infected people. Person-to-person spread is most likely to occur in family members and caregivers of sick individuals. Modes of transmission are still being investigated.

**When and for how long is a person able to spread the disease?**

At this time, it is not known how long a person is able to transmit Nipah virus.

**How is a person diagnosed?**

A variety of laboratory tests exist to test for Nipah virus. If you feel you have been exposed to Nipah virus, contact your healthcare provider.

## **What is the treatment?**

Currently, no drug treatment has been proven to be effective in treating Nipah infection. However, health care providers may offer supportive therapy (i.e., rest, fluid intake) to help manage symptoms. At this time, early treatment with the antiviral drug, ribavirin, can reduce the duration of fever and the severity of disease. However, how well this treatment cures the disease or improves survival is still uncertain.

## **Does past infection make a person immune?**

This is unknown at this time.

## **Should children or others be excluded from child care, school, work or other activities if they have Nipah virus?**

Yes. Person-to-person transmission of Nipah has been reported. Because it is unknown how long an infected person can spread Nipah, the North Dakota Department of Health should be consulted before people are allowed to return to work, school or child care.

## **What can be done to prevent the spread of Nipah virus?**

This disease can be prevented by avoiding animals that are known to be infected and using appropriate personal protective equipment devices when it is necessary to come into contact with potentially infected animals in areas where the virus circulates. People in affected countries should also avoid eating or drinking date palm sap.

## **Additional Information:**

Additional information is available by calling the North Dakota Department of Health at 800.472.2180.

**This disease is a reportable condition. As mandated by North Dakota law, any incidence of this disease shall be reported to the North Dakota Department of Health.**

## Resources:

1. Heymann, D. L. (2015). *Control of Communicable Diseases Manual, 20<sup>th</sup> Edition*. Nipah and Hendra Viral Diseases. American Public Health Association. 2015: 428-431.
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2015). Nipah Virus. [www.cdc.gov/vhf/nipah/](http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/nipah/).
3. World Health Organization. (2014). [www.who.int/csr/disease/nipah/en/](http://www.who.int/csr/disease/nipah/en/).