
Nipah Virus: India Races to Contain the Outbreak



In India, health authorities have taken swift action by closing schools, offices, and public transport while implementing extensive testing measures. These efforts are taken in response to the outbreak of the Nipah virus that has killed two people.

It is concerning that this virus, with a mortality rate as high as three out of every four infected individuals, has made experts more worried, who warn of its potential to initiate a new pandemic.

Nipah is classified as a zoonotic virus, which means it can spread from animals to humans and infect humans through direct contact with infected animals or their bodily fluids. Additionally, another route of transmission for this virus involves consuming contaminated food items, such as fruit products tainted with urine or saliva from infected bats.

According to the World Health Organization, it is possible that people may be infectious for periods as long as 45 days.

Health agencies estimate between 40% to 75% of people infected with Nipah will die from the virus, but the specific rate of Nipah virus infections can vary, influenced by the severity of the outbreak and the effectiveness of the local medical systems in managing the disease.

As reported in the news, public health workers have undertaken extensive testing efforts, screening hundreds of individuals, testing hundreds of workers and schools, government buildings, religious institutions, public transport, and public offices. These actions reflect a proactive approach to contain the outbreak and protect public health.

WHO recognises Nipah as a priority pathogen requiring urgent research. It is among the select 10 diseases listed by the agency as having the potential to initiate the next pandemic, for which there are currently few to no countermeasures in place. Unfortunately, diagnosing Nipah virus infection can indeed be challenging due to its nonspecific symptoms and the potentially lengthy incubation period. This highlights the need for more research.

Source: [Forbes](#)

Image Credit: [iStock](#)

Published on : Mon, 18 Sep 2023