



07/DoPH/CDD/PHE-Gen/2025-2026/804

Date: 16th January, 2026

Public Health Advisory

Situation overview

An outbreak of Nipah virus infection (NiV) has been confirmed in West Bengal, India, with five active cases, mainly among healthcare workers and close contacts. Initial cases had a recent travel history and are linked to exposure to contaminated fruit or raw date palm sap. At present, the World Health Organization (WHO) has not designated the Nipah virus outbreak as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). Based on their initial risk assessment, the risk is moderate and the level of confidence is low to moderate.

What is Nipah virus?

Nipah virus is a zoonotic infection caused by a virus in the Paramyxoviridae family, with fruit bats as the natural reservoir and pigs as potential hosts. The virus can spread from animals to humans and between humans through close contact and bodily fluids. The disease can cause severe respiratory illness and encephalitis/brain inflammation, with high case fatality rates.

Transmission

- Direct contact with infected animals (especially fruit bats).
- Consumption of food contaminated by bats (e.g., raw date palm sap or partially eaten fruit).
- Close contact with infected individuals, including family members and caregivers.

Symptoms

- Early: Fever, headache, muscle pain, vomiting, sore throat.
- Severe: Dizziness, confusion, seizures, encephalitis, respiratory distress, coma.

Incubation period: 4–14 days (may be longer)

Treatment

- No specific antiviral therapy exists
- Supportive care: hydration, respiratory support, and intensive medical care for complications

Advisory for the Public

- Avoid contact with fruit bats and sick animals (pigs, horses, goats, cats, dogs).
- Do not consume raw date palm sap or fruits that may have been contaminated by bats or animals.
- Wash all fruits and vegetables thoroughly with clean water before eating.
- Avoid close contact with people showing fever, cough, breathing difficulties, or unusual behavior.
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water.
- Wear a face mask in crowded areas and maintain social distance.



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- Seek immediate medical attention if you develop fever, headache, sore throat, cough, breathing difficulty, confusion, or seizures.
- Inform healthcare workers if you have been in contact with sick individuals, exposed to bats or animals, or recently traveled to affected areas.
- Avoid non-essential travel to affected areas.
- If you return from affected areas, monitor your health for 14 days and seek care if symptoms appear.

(Karma Jamtsho)
Director



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