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<b>To:</b>	After-Hours Centres, Primary Care providers, Urgent Care providers, EDs, Pharmacy, HealthPathways, Healthline, Ka Ora, Healthify, Medical Officers of Health, GPNZ, Immunisation Coordinators; Regional Comms Leads including Hauora Māori and Pacific Health, NPHS national and regional services.
<b>From:</b>	Dr Susan Jack National Clinical Director   Medical Officer of Health, NPHS
<b>Date:</b>	05/02/2025
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Public Health Advisory: Nipah virus – for awareness</b>

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**Please share this public health advisory with your kaimahi networks for their information.**

## **Public Health Advisory: World Health Organization (WHO) reports new cases of Nipah virus but risk to Aotearoa New Zealand is very low**

### **Summary**

On 26 January 2026, the WHO reported two cases of Nipah virus infection in West Bengal, India. There is no evidence of international spread and the risk of Nipah virus in Aotearoa is very low.

### **Key messages**

- Anyone travelling to areas where Nipah virus is present should take simple precautions (see below) to reduce their risk of exposure to the virus. Risk of infection is very low, especially if these are followed. Nipah virus outbreaks have been reported in several areas in India and Bangladesh in the past year; information [here](#).
- Infection normally occurs through contact with infected animals, or consuming contaminated food. Transmission between people is very rare and requires very close contact.
- There are systems in place to ensure unwell travellers arriving in Aotearoa are checked and managed appropriately. No additional border measures are currently required. WHO does not recommend any travel restrictions for India.

### **Key actions for healthcare professionals**

#### **Travel health advice**

Advise travellers planning to visit areas where there is an outbreak to take **simple precautions** to reduce their risk of exposure to Nipah:

- Avoid contact with sick animals (especially fruit bats and pigs), and their bodily fluids.
- Do not eat fruit that might have been in contact with an animal or their bodily fluids. Thoroughly wash and peel fruits before consumption.
- Do not drink raw or fermented date palm juice.
- Avoid close or unprotected contact with people with Nipah virus or their bodily fluids.

- Follow good hygiene practices, such as hand hygiene including after touching animals, visiting people who are sick, or being in public places.
- Further preventative information is provided on the [SafeTravel](#) website.

## Management of returning travellers who are unwell

- Continue to follow the standard approach for fever in the returning travellers (See Healthpathways)
- The risk of Nipah virus is very low, particularly if the above precautions have been followed.
  - However, have awareness of Nipah virus in travellers returning from areas where there is an outbreak. Nipah virus outbreaks have been reported in several areas in India and Bangladesh in the past year; information [here](#).
- In the unlikely event that Nipah virus is suspected due to compatible travel history, exposures and symptoms: isolate the patient, follow standard infection control precautions and contact your local Infectious Disease service for advice.
- Infectious Disease physicians are advised to discuss testing requirements with their local microbiologist.

## Background

Nipah virus infection is a zoonotic illness. The primary reservoir for Nipah virus is fruit bats, but other animals (e.g. pigs and horses) can be infected.

Human outbreaks of Nipah virus have only been identified in South and Southeast Asia, generally in rural locations. Nipah virus outbreaks have been reported in India and Bangladesh in the past year.

In humans, the incubation period is generally between 3 and 14 days but can be up to 45 days.

Human infection presents with a broad range of symptoms, from asymptomatic cases to acute onset of flu-like symptoms with rapid progression to acute respiratory infection and encephalitis. The case fatality rate is estimated to be 40-75%.

Infection with Nipah virus can occur through:

- Consumption of contaminated food or fluid such as raw date palm sap.
- Direct contact with an infected animal or their saliva, urine and faeces.
- Rarely, human-to-human transmission can occur through very close contact with an infected person or their bodily fluids, e.g. in household or healthcare settings.

Treatment is supportive, and there are no licensed vaccines or specific antiviral treatments available.

## Further information

- [Nipah virus infection - WHO](#)
- [Infectious diseases - Safe Travel Nipah, Hendra, and other henipaviruses - UpToDate](#)