

Know if Nipah virus' second wave has hit your city



The second wave of Nipah virus outbreak has hit again, causing more fatalities in Kerala - so here's a state-wise anatomy of spread of Nipah virus in India.

After a temporary thaw, the Nipah virus has hit Kerala once again - claiming 16 lives in the Kozhikode and Malappuram districts, upon which, the state government has issued a warning for possible second outbreak. The health ministry of Kerala has informed that while the first outbreak is under control, they are possibly hit by second outbreak as Nipah has an exceptional rate of mutation and can now spread among humans more intensely. Luckily, this outbreak is because of "stuttering chain of transmission" - that is once spread from fruit bats, it moves mainly to people in close contact with patients and not due to mutational changes.

However, the spread of Nipah virus is still a test of Indian healthcare's capacity to respond to and act upon public health emergencies like this. Thankfully enough, Kerala administration has acted very efficiently, as doctors had diagnosed the virus in the very second patient, a diagnostic speed unrivalled in developing countries. While there is no specific medicine or vaccine to treat or prevent Nipah virus, the basic thumb rule of killing spread of any virus must be adapted - the basic, ages-old infection control regimes. And to be better aware, certain states have rolled out notices alerting the administration and people to be cautious.

Kerala: With Nipah having claimed 16 lives so far, the state is under high alert and authorities have notified residents and tourists to be extra-cautious, especially in Kozhikode, Malappuram, Wayanad, and Kannur districts. UAE has banned imports of fresh vegetables and fruits from Kerala and it is advisable to avoid consumption of fresh food that may have arrived from the state.

Delhi: There has been no reports of infection in Delhi, but the government has issued a health advisory asking people to remain cautious and stop consumption of raw date palm sap as well as fruits that fallen off trees.

Himachal Pradesh: After rumours of findings of dead bats carrying Nipah virus had spread, the administration ruled out such rumours, yet issued a notice asking people to take precautions in the wake of the virus outbreak. Besides fruits, the state has urged everyone to avoid contact with pigs and pig handlers, maintaining personal hygiene, and avoiding consumption of raw fruits.

Bihar: Again, there has been no cases of Nipah, but authorities had expressed concern over the spread of the virus and has advised to keep a distance from bats and pigs; and not consume fruits without washing them.

Goa: Being on alert since first reports of Nipah virus in Kerala.

Pondicherry: The Puducherry Collector Office on Saturday issued an advisory mentioning the preventive steps to be taken in high-risk areas to check the spread of the contagious disease.