

Human Metapneumovirus (hMPV)



Infectious Disease
Epidemiology &
Prevention Division

What is hMPV?

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Human metapneumovirus (hMPV) was discovered in 2001 and has been shown to cause respiratory illness in patients of all ages, but mostly in young children, the elderly and the immunocompromised. hMPV is one of the leading causes of bronchiolitis in infants but also causes pneumonia, asthma problems and croup (a type of cough). Healthy people infected with hMPV usually have mild symptoms, but some people may have complications that require hospital admission.

Some studies suggest that all children are infected at least once by the age of five. However, recent studies have shown that older individuals or those with weakened immune systems may be at risk for more severe disease. Infections will likely occur throughout one's lifetime and are usually mild with little to no symptoms in healthy people.

What are the symptoms of hMPV?

Healthy people infected with hMPV usually have mild symptoms, but some people may develop more severe disease. Symptoms of hMPV usually start three to six days after exposure to the virus.

Symptoms of **mild disease**:

- Cough
- Runny/stuffy nose
- Sore throat
- Fever
- Shortness of breath

Symptoms of **severe disease**:

- Pneumonia
- Bronchiolitis
- Asthma problems

How is hMPV spread?

The virus is transmitted through direct contact with an infected individual, exposure to their sneezing or coughing, or by touching surfaces or objects contaminated with the virus. Infection can occur when the virus comes in contact with the eyes, mouth or nose. Typically, the disease spreads more frequently during winter and spring.



How do I know if I have hMPV?

See your health care provider. Limited testing is available through lab testing.

How is hMPV prevented and treated?



Frequent and thorough hand washing, especially if you are ill or caring for others who are ill, is important in preventing hMPV. Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, and discard used tissues promptly. Treatment includes fever reducers, hydration and oxygen, if necessary.

**hMPV is not a reportable disease in Indiana, therefore data is not widely available. However, outbreaks are reportable to the Respiratory Team within the Infectious Disease Epidemiology and Prevention Division at 317-233-7125.*

For additional information on hMPV:

cdc.gov/ncird/human-metapneumovirus.html

