

Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV)

Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) is currently causing concern in China due to a surge in respiratory illness cases, particularly in the northern provinces. HMPV is a respiratory virus that can cause symptoms similar to the flu, such as cough, fever, nasal congestion, and shortness of breath, primarily affecting young children, older adults, and individuals with weakened immune systems. The outbreak has overwhelmed hospitals and raised public health concerns, with children under 14 and seniors being the most affected groups. While the World Health Organization (WHO) has not declared an emergency, both Chinese health authorities and the WHO are closely monitoring the situation. In response, health officials are establishing a monitoring system for pneumonia of unknown origin to better handle future outbreaks. Although there is no specific antiviral treatment for HMPV, preventive measures like regular handwashing, avoiding close contact with sick individuals, and maintaining good hygiene can help reduce the spread of the virus.

As HMPV (Human Metapneumovirus) circulates in the northern hemisphere, Te Marae Ora Ministry of Health (TMO) would like to reassure the public that the current risk to the nation remains **LOW**. We continue to monitor trends in Influenza-like Illnesses (ILI) and Severe Acute Respiratory Infections (SARI), with weekly surveillance to ensure public health safety. Should the situation change, TMO will keep the community informed and provide necessary preventative guidance.

Advice for Travelers

For those traveling abroad to countries who are high risk and returning home, TMO recommends practicing strong Public Health measures such as regular handwashing, avoiding close contact with sick individuals, and maintaining good hygiene. If you feel unwell while overseas or upon your return, please seek medical advice immediately. Keep up-to-date with your flu vaccinations and consider carrying a face mask if needed.

How is HMPV Transmitted?

HMPV is primarily spread through respiratory droplets from coughing or sneezing, and can also spread through contact with contaminated surfaces. Regular handwashing is crucial in preventing transmission, especially in crowded or poorly ventilated environments.

Symptoms of HMPV

HMPV causes respiratory symptoms similar to the flu, including cough, fever, nasal congestion, and shortness of breath. It primarily affects young children, older adults, and individuals with weakened immune systems. In more severe cases, particularly for high-risk groups, it may lead to:

- Bronchiolitis
- Pneumonia
- Exacerbation of asthma or COPD

TMO urges the public to stay informed, practice preventative measures, and seek medical attention if symptoms arise. TMO will continue to monitor the situation closely and provide updates as necessary.

For further information, please visit TMO website for regular updates or contact the Public Health on 29110.

Please find a link to WHO website with more information on HMPV

[Trends of acute respiratory infection, including human metapneumovirus, in the Northern Hemisphere](#)