



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
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Nipah

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Why is in news? Nipah kills two in Kerala: What is this virus, why is it dangerous even though it doesn't spread fast

Cases of Nipah infection have been found in Kerala again, after two people were confirmed to have died of the viral disease in Kozhikode district. Two others, aged nine and 24, are under treatment. They are family members of the first victim, who died on August 30.

About the virus:

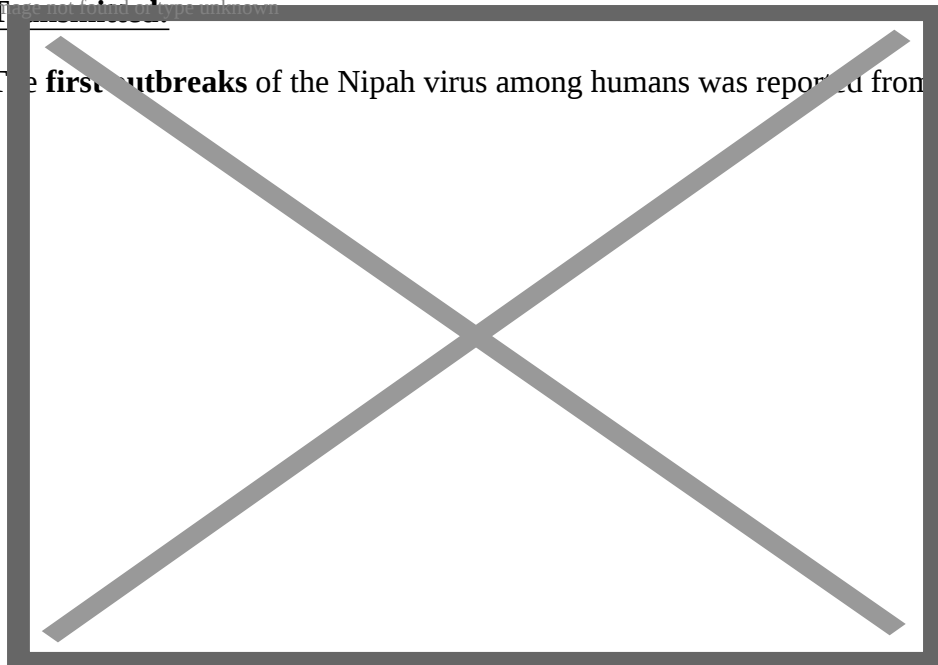
Nipah is a **zoonotic disease**, which means it is **transmitted to humans through infected animals or contaminated food**.

The organism which causes Nipah Virus encephalitis is an RNA or Ribonucleic acid virus of the **family Paramyxoviridae**, genus Henipavirus, and is **closely related to Hendra virus**.

Hendra virus (HeV) infection is a **rare emerging zoonosis** that causes severe and often fatal disease in both infected horses and humans.

The transmission is unknown

The **first outbreaks** of the Nipah virus among humans was reported from Malaysia (1998) and Singapore (1999).



The virus takes its name from the

village in Malaysia where the person in whom the virus was first isolated died of the disease.

The **animal host reservoir** for this virus is known to be the **fruit bat**, commonly known as flying fox.

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Fruit bats are known to transmit this virus to other animals like pigs, and also dogs, cats, goats, horses and sheep.

Humans get **infected mainly through direct contact with these animals**, or through **consumption of food contaminated by saliva or urine of these infected animals**.

But human-to-human transmission is also considered possible.

The person-to-person spread of NiV is regularly reported in **Bangladesh and India**.

This is most commonly seen in the families and caregivers of NiV-infected patients, and in healthcare settings.

Since it was first identified in 1998-99, there have been multiple outbreaks of the Nipah virus, all of them in **South and Southeast Asian nations**. In Bangladesh, there have been at least 10 outbreaks since 2001.

Cases in India:

The year 2001 saw the first outbreak of Nipah Virus in Siliguri, India followed by the 2007 outbreak in Nadia of West Bengal.

The 2018 outbreak of Kerala was declared over soon after it was localized in Kozhikode and Malappuram districts of Kerala and isolated cases in 2019 and 2021.

Symptoms:

Its symptoms, according to the **US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**, fever, headache, cough, sore throat, difficulty in breathing, and vomiting.

In severe cases, disorientation, drowsiness, seizures, encephalitis (swelling of the brain) can occur, progressing to coma and death.

Preventive Measures:

Avoid physical contact with an infected person.

Wash hands after caring for an infected person.

Stay away from consuming raw date palm sap or toddy.

Discard fruits with signs of bat bites.

Treatment:

Currently, there are **no vaccines for both humans and animals**. Intensive supportive care is given to humans infected by Nipah virus.

