Human metapneumovirus

Human metapneumovirus (HMPV) is a respiratory virus that causes a mild infection similar to a common cold or respiratory syncytial virus infection. Symptoms include cough, fever, runny or blocked nose, headache and tiredness. Complications such as bronchiolitis or pneumonia can occur in young children.

How it spreads

HMPV spreads by droplets in the air that contain the virus or direct contact with mucus or saliva. People get infected by:

- breathing in droplets when an infected person breathes, coughs or sneezes on them
- touching a surface contaminated with droplets – for example, hands, tissues, toys or eating utensils – and then touching their eyes, nose or mouth.

Exclusion period

If a person has respiratory symptoms (cough, sneezing, runny or blocked nose, sore throat), exclude them only if:

- the respiratory symptoms are severe, **or**
- the respiratory symptoms are getting worse (more frequent or severe), **or**
- they also have concerning symptoms (fever, rash, tiredness, pain, poor feeding).

Otherwise do not exclude.

A person often has an ongoing cough after they have recovered from a respiratory infection. If their other symptoms have gone and they feel well, they can return to the service.

Actions for educators and other staff

Ensure staff and children have good respiratory and hand hygiene.

Ensure staff use appropriate cleaning practices, as described in the *Staying healthy* guidelines.

Actions for parents and carers

Keep your child at home until their symptoms have gone and they feel well. If your child still has a cough, but their other symptoms have gone and they feel well, they can return to the service.

Teach them to cough or sneeze into a tissue, then throw the tissue into a bin and wash their hands. If there are no tissues nearby, teach them to cough or sneeze into their inner elbow instead of their hands.

More information about human metapneumovirus

See NSW Health for more information on prevention, diagnosis and treatment of respiratory viruses, including HMPV (health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/respiratory-viruses.aspx).

To find out if a child needs medical help:

- use the online symptom checker (healthdirect.gov.au/symptom-checker)
- speak to a registered nurse by calling the 24-hour health advice hotline on 1800 022 222.