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Human metapneumovirus (HMPV)

Human metapneumovirus (HMPV) is one of the many respiratory viruses that can cause infections in people of all ages particularly during the winter and early spring months. HMPV is already in circulation globally, including in India, and cases of respiratory illnesses associated with HMPV have been reported in various countries.

Disease Course of HMPV infection:

Patient may develop symptoms after 3 to 6 days of exposure. The symptoms include Fever, runny or stuffy nose, sore throat, cough, wheezing, shortness of breath, rash. The virus infection is usually a mild and self-limiting condition and most cases recover on their own. Young children, older individuals, immunocompromised individuals, and Asthma or COPD patients are at risk of developing severe disease.

Prevention:

The prevention of transmission of the virus can be done with simple measures such as washing hands often with soap and water; avoid touching their eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands; avoid close contact with people who are exhibiting symptoms of the disease; cover mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing etc.

ICMR guidelines:

Furthermore, based on current data from ICMR and the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) network, there has been **no unusual surge** in Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) or Severe Acute Respiratory Illness (SARI) cases in the country.

Also, it was informed that adequate diagnostic facilities are available with the ICMR-VRDL laboratories to diagnose.

World Health Organisation (WHO) recommendation:

WHO recommends that individuals in areas where it is winter, take normal precautions to prevent the spread and reduce risks posed by respiratory pathogens, especially to the most vulnerable. People with mild symptoms should stay home to avoid infecting other people and rest.

No need to panic for now and with simple self-hygiene measures, the disease can be prevented.

Medical Unit