



## Human Metapneumovirus (hMPV)

### What is Human Metapneumovirus?

hMPV is a respiratory virus that causes both upper and lower respiratory tract infections in people of all ages. hMPV infections usually occur in late winter and early spring, and most often affect young infants, elderly and individuals with weakened immune systems.

### How can I get hMPV?

The virus is spread through droplets in the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes. You can also become infected through direct contact with discharges from the nose or throat of an infected person.

### What are the symptoms of hMPV?

The normally expected symptoms include:

- Fever
- Runny nose or nasal congestion
- Cough
- Wheezing
- Sore throat or hoarseness
- Myalgia

### What are the complications of hMPV?

The complications of hMPV are:

- Pneumonia
- Bronchiolitis
- Otitis media
- Diarrhea

### Who is most at risk for complications from hMPV?

Human metapneumovirus can cause serious complications (problems) in:

- Children less than 1 year of age and the elderly
- People who have underlying medical conditions such as:
  - problems with their immune system
  - lung conditions (chronic lung disease and severe asthma)
  - organ transplant recipients



### **If I have contact with hMPV, how long does it take to become ill?**

Although it is not entirely known, most people will become sick between 3- 5 days after contact with the virus.

### **How can I stop the spread of hMPV?**

Steps that will decrease the spread of hMPV:

- Stay home if you are sick. Don't spread germs.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Dispose of tissues.
- If you don't have a tissue, cough into your sleeve.
- Wash your hands frequently and wash them well.
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizers if soap and water are not available.
- Germs are often carried on your hands. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Clean hard surfaces that are handled regularly such as doorknobs, toys and telephones.

### **How is hMPV diagnosed?**

In order to diagnose hMPV your doctor needs to swab the back of your nasal passages through your nose. However, hMPV is not routinely tested for except in outbreak situations.

### **How is hMPV treated?**

Treatment is supportive.

### **Who can I call for more information?**

For more information about hMPV, talk to your health care provider.

*Adapted with permission from the Halton Region Health Department.*