



HMPV Outbreak: Top U.S. Hotspots and Safety Tips

Description

The virus inciting pandemic anxieties in China, human metapneumovirus (HMPV), has reportedly infected thousands of Americans over the past year, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Since January 2024, around 28,000 Americans have contracted HMPV, an elusive respiratory disease now deemed “the most important virus you've never heard of.”

In April 2024, infections peaked, with 1,666 positive cases reported in a single week, accounting for eight percent of all tests conducted during that period. The most recent CDC data indicates a decrease, with a test positivity rate of two percent. Since Thanksgiving, weekly positive cases have oscillated between 200 and 350, a figure health authorities consider normal.

HMPV, primarily causing cold-like symptoms, has been partially linked to a viral outbreak in China, overwhelming hospitals in the northern provinces. Despite the pandemic fears it has sparked, other winter illnesses like Covid-19 and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) have seen considerably higher rates. For example, over one million Americans have sought emergency care for RSV, while nearly ten million have battled influenza since October 2024.

Emerging in 2001, HMPV can lead to severe conditions like bronchitis and pneumonia, causing breathing difficulties, severe coughs, or wheezing. Its death rate remains uncertain, but experts estimate a mortality rate of 10 to 30 percent among hospitalized patients.

Without vaccines or treatments, the virus spreads through respiratory droplets from coughs or sneezes, close personal contact, and touching contaminated surfaces. The current focus remains on vigilance and hygiene, as American respiratory infections, including Covid-19, influenza, and RSV, continue to hover at high or very high levels nationwide.

Vocabulary List:

1. **Inciting** /ɪn'saɪtɪŋ/ (verb): Causing or provoking an action or feeling.
2. **Elusive** /ɪ'luːsɪv/ (adjective): Difficult to find catch or achieve.
3. **Oscillated** /'ɒsɪleɪtɪd/ (verb): Moved or swung back and forth in a regular rhythm.
4. **Sought** /sɔːt/ (verb): Past tense of seek; to attempt to find something.
5. **Mortality** /mɔːr'tælɪti/ (noun): The state of being subject to death; the death rate in a specific population.
6. **Vigilance** /'vɪdʒɪləns/ (noun): The action or state of keeping careful watch for possible danger or difficulties.



Comprehension Questions

Multiple Choice

1. What virus has reportedly infected thousands of Americans and is causing pandemic anxieties in China?
Option: Influenza
Option: Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV)
Option: Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)
Option: Covid-19
2. During which month did HMPV infections peak in April 2024?
Option: January
Option: February
Option: April
Option: December
3. What is the estimated mortality rate of hospitalized patients with HMPV?
Option: 2-5%
Option: 10-30%
Option: 50-75%
Option: 80-90%
4. Which of the following is NOT a way that the HMPV virus spreads?
Option: Respiratory droplets
Option: Touching contaminated surfaces
Option: Mosquito bites
Option: Close personal contact
5. What is the current focus of controlling the spread of HMPV and other respiratory infections?
Option: Wearing face masks
Option: Vaccination drives
Option: Hygiene and vigilance
Option: Social distancing
6. What has been the range of weekly positive cases of HMPV since Thanksgiving?
Option: 50-100



Option: 100-200

Option: 200-350

Option: 350-500

True-False

7. HMPV emerged in 2001.
8. HMPV has a mortality rate of 50-75% among all infected individuals.
9. HMPV has vaccines and specific treatments available for it.
10. The virus can spread through close personal contact.
11. Influenza has seen higher rates of infections compared to HMPV since October 2024.
12. The test positivity rate for HMPV decreased to 2% in the most recent CDC data.

Gap-Fill

13. Since January 2024, around _____ Americans have contracted HMPV.
14. Emerging in 2001, HMPV can lead to severe conditions like bronchitis and _____.
15. Over one million Americans have sought emergency care for _____ since October 2024.
16. Experts estimate a mortality rate of _____ among hospitalized patients with HMPV.
17. The virus primarily spreads through respiratory droplets from coughs or sneezes, close personal contact, and touching _____ surfaces.
18. The focus remains on vigilance and _____ to control the spread of respiratory infections.



Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) 2. April 3. 10-30% 4. Mosquito bites 5. Hygiene and vigilance 6. 200-350

True-False: 7. True 8. False 9. False 10. True 11. True 12. True

Gap-Fill: 13. 28,000 14. pneumonia 15. RSV 16. 10 to 30 percent 17. contaminated 18. hygiene

Answer

CATEGORY

1. Health - LEVEL4

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