

NIPAH VIRUS INFECTION LABORATORY GUIDANCE



Outbreak Response Unit, Division of Public Health Surveillance and Response, Centre for Emerging Zoonotic & Parasitic Diseases, Centre for Respiratory Diseases and Meningitis
24-hour hotline number 0800 212 552

UPDATED: 28 January 2026

STEP 1: ASSESSMENT OF PERSON FOR CONSIDERATION OF NiV INFECTION

A **suspected case** of Nipah virus (NiV):

Any person presenting with

- an acute onset of fever ($\geq 38^{\circ}\text{C}$) with new onset of altered mental status or seizure and/or
- fever with headache and/or
- cough or shortness of breath;

AND has an epidemiological link

- who visited or resided in Kerala, India, or a community affected by a NiV disease outbreak), in the six weeks prior to onset of illness and;
- had direct contact with or cared for suspected/confirmed NiV cases (humans/pigs) in the six weeks prior to onset of illness;

NOTE: The differential diagnoses for travelers from South Asia or South-East Asia is broad and malaria, dengue, chikungunya, zika, leptospirosis, typhoid and common respiratory infections should be excluded in patient.

STEP 2: COMPLETE THE CASE INVESTIGATION FORM

- Complete the case investigation form fully (available [here](#)).
- Include case investigation form with specimens submitted for testing

STEP 3: SUBMIT SPECIMENS FOR SPECIALIZED LABORATORY INVESTIGATION

- For testing, the following specimens are used:

SPECIMEN	CONSIDERATIONS
Blood / serum	SST or clotted blood tubes, 1 tube (approx. 10 ml) <i>Required for all individuals if NiV infection is to be excluded</i>
Nasopharyngeal swab	In viral transport medium <i>Required for all individuals if NiV infection is to be excluded</i>
Cerebrospinal fluid	Submit at least 1 ml <i>Submit for patient presenting with encephalitis</i>
Urine	Submit in urine specimen jar <i>Additional specimen, not required for all investigations</i>

- The specimens should be packaged in compliance with the guidelines for the transport of dangerous biological goods (i.e. Category A shipments with triple packaging using absorbent material)

(<http://www.iata.org/publications/dgr/Pages/index.aspx>) and couriered directly and urgently to:

**Centre for Emerging Zoonotic and Parasitic Diseases, Special Viral Pathogens Laboratory
National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD), National Health Laboratory Service (NHLS)
1 Modderfontein Rd, Sandringham, 2131**

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