



Is it Metapneumovirus? Does it matter?

By Anne Meneghetti, MD

Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) is in the same family as RSV. It's been around for many years, yet the availability of new tests has led to increased diagnosis and awareness. HMPV can cause URI, bronchitis, and pneumonia, similar to influenza, RSV, COVID-19, and other viruses. Infection can occur in people of all ages, particularly children, older adults, and those with weakened immune systems. Symptoms commonly include cough, nasal congestion, and shortness of breath, so symptoms alone don't distinguish between these viruses. While influenza is more common in the winter, HMPV is more actively circulating in late winter and early spring.

Does knowing whether a patient has metapneumovirus matter? There's no specific treatment, so confirming a diagnosis of HMPV isn't typically a routine consideration. In terms of reducing spread of HMPV, the same preventive recommendations apply as for other respiratory viruses. Awareness about seasonal peaks in HMPV, [tracked by the CDC](#), contributes to the overall understanding of late winter and early spring respiratory symptomatology.