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Nipah scare: BBMP to move pigs out of city

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With the fear of Nipah virus (NiV) yet to blow over, the BBMP is intensifying its drive against NiV, and Animal Husbandry and Health departments are conducting a survey of pigs around the city which is normally done once in four years. (Photo: Pixabay)

Bengaluru: With the fear of Nipah virus (NiV) yet to blow over, the BBMP is intensifying its drive against NiV, and Animal Husbandry and Health departments are conducting a survey of pigs around the city which is normally done once in four years.

Mayor Sampath Raj said, "There are many pigs in some localities, like Yelahanka. As a precaution,

we will move these animals out of the city. It is only for examination and isolation and sterilisation of affected animals."

The state has over the last month reported four suspected cases of the virus, two from Dakshina Kannada and one each from Gadag and Shivmogga. But all of them tested negative. Recently, three nurses from the city were suspected to have contracted NiV and their test reports are awaited.

BBMP Chief Health Officer Dr M.N. Lokesh said, "There are reports that the infection spreads from mammals. We are following the orders of the government."

BBMP and Health Department officials are also planning to take necessary action against bats, which are suspected to be a major cause of infection.

IISc lead scientist Dr T.V. Ramachandra, said, "Nipah virus (NiV) is an emerging zoonotic virus (a virus transmitted to humans from animals). Fruit bats of the family Pteropodidae particularly

species belonging to the Pteropus genus - are the natural hosts for Nipah virus. Nipah outbreaks in pigs and other domestic animals (horses, goats, sheep, cats and dogs) were first reported."

Symptoms to watch out for

NiV infection in humans can cause wide range of clinical presentations, from asymptomatic (no symptoms) to acute respiratory syndrome (cough, breathlessness and respiratory distress) and fatal encephalitis (inflammation in the brain).

After exposure to virus, symptoms start after an incubation period of 5-14 days. Usual symptoms are fever and headache for 3-10 days followed by drowsiness, confusion, seizures and altered sensorium. Signs and symptoms can progress rapidly to coma and death in 24-48 hours.