



HANTAVIRUS FACT SHEET

What is Hantavirus?

Hantavirus is a rodent virus that can be transmitted to humans through exposure to the rodent's urine, feces and saliva. The known rodent carriers of hantavirus in the U.S. are the: deer mouse, white-footed mouse, cotton rat and rice rat. The hantavirus found in the U.S. causes a pulmonary syndrome in humans.

How can you get hantavirus pulmonary syndrome?

Rodent infestation remains the main source of infection. A person may become infected by breathing or cleaning rodent droppings or nests, or by living or working in rodent-infested settings. Rarely, persons may also be infected from a wild rodent bite.

What are the symptoms of hantavirus?

Symptoms may vary from none to severe and can occur 7 to 39 days after exposure. Early symptoms are "flu-like" and can last for 3 – 5 days. They can include:

- fever
- muscle pain
- fatigue
- headache
- chills
- dizziness
- nausea and vomiting

As the disease gets worse, it can lead to difficulty breathing, severe respiratory failure and shock. There is no proof of humans spreading the virus to one another. If you have been exposed to rodent urine, droppings or nesting sites and have symptoms, see your doctor as soon as possible. Inform your doctor of rodent exposure.

How do you prevent infection?

Keep mice and rats out of your home. Avoid rodents and their urine, droppings, or nests. **SEAL UP, TRAP UP AND CLEAN UP.** Practice proper rodent control. Seal up rodent holes. Trap rodents and dispose of them properly. Clean up food sources and nesting sites quickly. Take proper precautions when cleaning rodent-infested areas. **Do not use a broom or vacuum cleaner**, this will cause virus particles to go into the air, where they can be breathed in. Soak all soiled materials for 10 minutes with a household disinfectant or bleach solution (1 ½ cups bleach per gallon of water) to kill hantavirus. Wear rubber or plastic gloves when cleaning and wash hands with soap and water when finished.

How to clean up a dead mouse or rat in a snap trap and how to clean up a rodent nest:

- Wear rubber or plastic gloves.
- Spray the dead mouse, rat, or nest, as well as the surrounding area, with a disinfectant or a mixture of bleach and water. Let it soak.

- Place nesting materials or trap with the dead rodent in a plastic bag. If you plan to reuse the trap, get the mouse or rat out of the trap by holding it over the bag and lifting the metal bar. Let the mouse or rat drop in the bag. Disinfect the trap.
- Seal the bag. Place the full bag in a second plastic bag. Seal that bag and throw it into a covered trash can that is regularly emptied.
- Wash gloved hands with soap and water or spray a disinfectant or bleach solution on gloves before taking them off and wash hands with soap and warm water after removing your gloves.

Where can I get more information on hantavirus?

www.cdc.gov

www.dshs.state.tx.us

Source of information: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

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