

Hantavirus

What is Hantavirus?

Hantavirus is a disease that affects the lungs. The virus is spread to people by infected rodents, especially the deer mouse. Infection can lead to a serious complication called Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS) that is fatal about 40% of the time.

How do I get Hantavirus?

- Infected rodents shed the virus in the poop, urine, and saliva.
- People become infected by breathing in air that contains the virus from the rodent's poop, urine, and saliva.
- Cleaning, construction, yard work, and other activities that disturb groups or nests of rodents can make the virus airborne.
- People can also become exposed if they are bitten by an infected rodent.
- While less common, touching your eyes or mouth after close contact with an infected rodent can spread the virus.
- Hantavirus is not spread from human to human.



What are the symptoms of Hantavirus?

Symptoms usually begin 2 to 3 weeks after being infected with the virus. However, it can be as short as 1 week or as long as 6 weeks.

Early symptoms are often similar to the flu:

- Fever
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Muscles aches – especially in thighs, hips, and lower back

Symptoms can progress to:

- Dry cough
- Shortness of breath and trouble breathing
- Fluid build-up in lungs – can lead to respiratory failure

What is the treatment for Hantavirus?

Currently there is no treatment for Hantavirus or HPS. If you experience these symptoms and have been in a rodent infested area, go to the doctor immediately. Early diagnosis is critical in order to treat the symptoms.

(over)

How do I prevent Hantavirus?

The best way to prevent Hantavirus is to keep rodents away from your home and yard.

- Cover or fill any holes where rodents could enter your home.
- Keep the outside area around your home clear of any wood, leaf, mulch or garbage piles.
- Be sure rodents cannot find a food source near your home. Keep trash in heavy duty plastic or metal garbage cans.
- Don't store pet food outside or in open containers. It will attract rodents and other pests to the area.
- Use traps with peanut butter or call pest control to decrease rodent populations in or near your home.



Questions?

Contact Tri-County Health Department at 720-200-9200 or visit us at: www.tchd.org

Cleaning and Sanitation

Rodent Infested Areas:

- Before cleaning a rodent infested area, open all window and doors for at least 30 minutes before entering.
- Wear gloves and soak the area with a disinfectant or bleach solution for 5-10 minutes.
- After soaking, mop or wet vacuum the area.

Rodent droppings:

- To clean rodent urine or droppings, heavily spray the area with a disinfectant or bleach solution. Let soak for 5 minutes.
- Use gloves and a paper towel to wipe up the urine or droppings.
- Mop or sponge the area with a disinfectant or bleach solution.

Bleach Solutions:

- Make sure the bleach solution is strong enough to kill the virus.
- The CDC recommended solution uses 1½ cups of household bleach mixed with 1 gallon of water.

Do NOT sweep or vacuum rodent droppings, urine, or nests. This will move the virus particles into the air, where they can be inhaled.

Be on the lookout!

In Colorado, the deer mouse is the most common species that carries Hantavirus. Deer mice are mostly found in rural or semi-rural areas. Deer mice differ in appearance from house mice. They are generally brown or tan, with a white belly and white feet. They also have dark eyes and ears that are larger than a house mouse.

