

Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome (HPS)

What is Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome?

Hantavirus disease is a rare, but often fatal disease of the lungs.

What are the symptoms?

The illness begins 1 to 6 weeks after exposure with fever, headache and muscle ache, especially in the hips, back and shoulders. The disease can quickly cause severe difficulty in breathing and, in some cases, death.

How do you get Hantavirus disease?

Anyone can get Hantavirus disease by breathing small particles of mouse urine, droppings or saliva of infected wild mice that have been stirred up into the air. This most commonly occurs in small, confined spaces where there is little air circulation.

Some activities that can put people at risk of infection include:

- Improperly cleaning up mouse and rat urine, droppings and nests
- Cleaning a shed or cabin that has been closed for some time
- Working in areas where mice and rats may live (such as barns)

How is Hantavirus diagnosed?

A blood test can be used to determine if your body has made antibodies to Hantavirus.

Is there treatment for Hantavirus disease?

Currently, there is no treatment for HPS. If infected individuals are tested early and hospitalized if needed, supportive care can improve their chances of survival.

How is Hantavirus spread?

The virus is spread by rodents, primarily deer mice. In the United States, there has never been an incident in which a person with Hantavirus disease has given the disease to another person.

How widespread is Hantavirus?

Despite the 2012 cases of disease in Yosemite National Park, Hantavirus is rare. Since HPS was first identified in 1993, there have been a total of 63 cases in California of which 21 cases were fatal.

How is Hantavirus prevented?

- Keep mice and rats out of your home.
 - ❖ If there are large numbers of mice in a home or other buildings, contact pest control services to remove them.

- Clean up mouse and rat urine, droppings, and nesting materials with a disinfectant or a mixture of bleach and water. Do **NOT** sweep or vacuum up mouse or rat urine, droppings or nest. This will cause virus to go into the air where they can be breathed in.
 - ❖ For proper cleaning methods refer to 'CDC Facts About Hantaviruses: What You Need to Know to Prevent the Disease HPS' Boucher at:
http://www.cdc.gov/hantavirus/pdf/HPS_Brochure.pdf

For more information, see the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Hantavirus page.
<http://www.cdc.gov/hantavirus/>

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