



## Hantavirus

New concerns accompany the mice that invade homes and businesses. Local deer mice have been found to carry and transmit a severe, potentially lethal, disease known as HPS (Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome). Other kinds of mice are suspected of carrying the virus too.

The disease has probably been present for a long time but hadn't been identified until recently. It was first identified in the southwestern United States.

HPS begins as a flu-like illness. People may have a fever, sore muscles, headaches, nausea, and have shortness-of-breath. As the disease progresses, fluid builds up in the lungs making breathing difficult. About 60 - 70 % of people with HPS die. Fortunately, the disease is very rare.

Hantavirus is normally found in rats, mice, voles, chipmunks and other rodents. The rodents do not seem to be affected by it. In the United States deer mice seem to be the primary source of the strain of virus that causes the disease in humans. We do not know yet how many types of rodents are responsible for transmitting the disease in British Columbia.

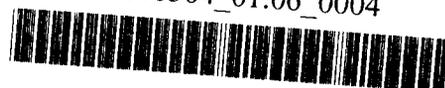
People get infected when they breathe in the virus that contaminates rodent urine, droppings and saliva. It may also be possible to catch the virus by eating or drinking contaminated products or by being bitten by an infected rodent. The disease does not seem to spread from person to person.

### Hantavirus Precautions

- prevent rodent entry into buildings
- if rodents get inside, eliminate them as soon as possible
- use traps so that rodent bodies can be removed (when using poisons, rodents may die in inaccessible areas)
- never touch dead rodents or used traps (wear rubber gloves)
- put dead rodents into a bucket of household disinfectant before burying the bodies
- disinfect used traps before reuse
- do not enter dusty crawl spaces where rodents have been active unless wearing at least an appropriate respirator, rubber gloves and coveralls
- when cleaning up rodent droppings, first wet them with a household disinfectant to kill the virus and to avoid creating dust which you could breathe



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# Hantavirus

The Hantavirus was first recognized as a unique health hazard in 1993, with 158 cases reported as of March 17, 1997. Outbreaks have been principally limited to the Four Corners region of Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Colorado. There are four different strains of the Hantavirus. Cases of the Hantavirus have been reported in twenty-six different states. The virus is most active when the temperature is between 45 and 72 degrees Fahrenheit.

The Hantavirus is spread through the urine and feces of infected rodents. It is an airborne virus. A person is infected with the virus by breathing in particles released into the air when infected rodents, their nests or their droppings are disturbed. This can happen when a person is handling rodents, disturbing rodent nests or burrows, cleaning buildings where rodents have made a home, or working outdoors. The virus will die quickly when exposed to sunlight.

## Safety

- Air out any closed sheds or buildings before entering
- Make sure the buildings are properly sealed from rodent access
- Trap until all mice are gone, using care to disinfect any trapped rodents
- Clean up droppings, only after the area has been disinfected
- Always wear a respirator which utilizes HEPA rated filters
- Dispose of all caught rodents, droppings and nesting materials in an appropriate manner

## Symptoms of Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome

- Fever and Muscle Aches
- Chills
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Abdominal pain
- Dry, non-productive cough



**THE HANTAVIRUS IS DEADLY!**

*If you suspect you have been infected, consult a physician immediately.*

Send e-mail to [bugdude@bepestfree.com](mailto:bugdude@bepestfree.com)

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