



HANTAVIRUS FACT SHEET

WHAT IS HANTAVIRUS?

Hantaviruses are a group of viruses that may be carried by some rodents. Infection with hantavirus can progress to Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome (HPS), which can be fatal.

HOW DO YOU GET HANTAVIRUS?

- By breathing in hantaviruses. This can happen when rodent urine and droppings that contain a hantavirus are stirred up into the air.
- By touching mouse or rat urine, droppings, or nesting materials that contain the virus and then touch their eyes, nose, or mouth.
- You can also get HPS from a mouse or rat bite.
- Only some kinds of mice and rats can give people hantaviruses that can cause HPS. In North America, they are the deer mouse, the white-footed mouse, the rice rat, and the cotton rat.

SYMPTOMS

If people get HPS, they will feel sick 1 to 5 weeks after they were around mice or rats that carried a hantavirus. At first symptoms may include fever, severe muscle aches, and fatigue. After a few days difficulty breathing, headaches, dizziness, chills, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and stomach pain may occur.

TREATMENT

There is no specific treatment or cure for hantavirus infection. Supportive treatment may be provided. Discuss treatment options with your doctor.

PREVENTION

Keep mice and rats out of your home.

Clean up mouse and rat urine, droppings, and nesting materials with a disinfectant or a mixture of bleach and water. Wear protective gear while cleaning.

DGHD EFFORTS

Reports of suspected and confirmed cases of disease are made to the Delaware General Health District (DGHD). The DGHD investigates potential sources of illness, conducts surveillance for the spread of disease, and engages in community outreach and education.