

Preventing Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome (HPS)



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PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT

Hantavirus in New Mexico: Seal Up! Trap Up! And Clean Up!

ALBUQUERQUE - Being exposed to rodents that carry the Hantavirus, specifically the deer mouse, or their droppings, is a risk factor for contracting the deadly respiratory disease known as Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome (HPS).

It is how two 20-somethings from McKinley and Torrance Counties died in June, according to Kenny Vigil, media contact for the New Mexico Department of Health. The state health department also noted how the case in McKinley County is the fifth reported death this year in New Mexico from the rodent-carrying respiratory disease.

With six reported cases in the state, Hantavirus has claimed the lives of other New Mexicans in the counties of Cibola, Sandoval, San Juan, and Santa Fe.

"Hantavirus is a deadly disease transmitted by infected rodents through their urine, droppings or saliva," Vigil said, adding that people contract the disease when they breathe in the aerosolized virus.

The deer mouse is the main carrier for Sin Nombre virus, the Hantavirus strain prevalent in New Mexico, health officials said. In addition to the deer mouse, the cotton rat, rice rat and white-footed mouse are other rodents known to carry Hantavirus.

"Due to a lot of precipitation during winter and early spring, many people are seeing a larger than usual number of mice, leading to increased chance of being exposed to the virus," said Dr. Paul Ettestad, the department's public health veterinarian.

The latest Hantavirus cases have prompted public health officials from the Albuquerque Area Indian Health Board to alert the 27 Pueblos, Nations and Tribes it serves about the need for the public to protect themselves and their communities from rodent exposure.

"One of the core functions of our Tribal Epidemiology Center is to partner with tribal communities to share data about emerging health concerns such as Hantavirus, and best practices for protecting individuals, families and communities from this rare, but very serious infection," said Kevin English, director of the Albuquerque Area Southwest Tribal Epidemiology Center (AASTEC).

As noted by the state health department and English, healthcare workers and the general public should familiarize themselves with symptoms of Hantavirus (see next page for tips on preventing HPS).

"We need to find mechanisms to not only partner up with the state health department but within our local infrastructure such as IHS and tribal mechanisms," explained Carleton Albert, Sr. (Zuni Pueblo), who co-chairs the AASTEC Executive Council. Albert went on to say that the public needs to be aware of all the warnings associated with Hantavirus, including educational tips to keep safe from exposure. "We need to make everybody aware there are recent cases in New Mexico," Albert said.

For more information visit www.cdc.gov/hantavirus

PREVENTING Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome (HPS)

What are the symptoms of HPS?

Early symptoms:

- Fever
- Headaches
- Muscle Aches
- Stomach Problems
- Dizziness
- Chills

Early symptoms include fatigue, fever and muscle aches, especially in the large muscle groups—thighs, hips, back, and sometimes shoulders. About half of all HPS patients also experience headaches, dizziness, chills, and abdominal problems, such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal pain.

Late symptoms:

- Lungs fill with fluid
- Shortness of Breath

Source: CDC

Four to ten days after the initial phase of illness, the late symptoms of HPS appear. These include coughing and shortness of breath, with the sensation of, as one survivor put it, a "...tight band around my chest and a pillow over my face" as the lungs fill with fluid.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING THESE SYMPTOMS

How can HPS be prevented?



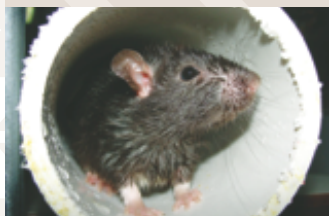
AIR OUT!

Air out closed-up buildings, homes, hogans, sheds and storage units before entering



SEAL UP!

Seal up holes inside and outside the home to keep rodents out



TRAP UP!

Trap mice until they are all gone



CLEAN UP!

WEAR RUBBER GLOVES

USE DISINFECTANT (or a mixture of water and bleach) to clean up nests and droppings

DON'T SWEEP up rodent droppings into the air where they can be inhaled

ELIMINATE FOOD SOURCES

- Keep food, garbage, animal feed and grains in thick plastic or metal containers with tight lids
- Clean up spilled food and dishes right away
- Always put pet food away after use



ELIMINATE POSSIBLE NESTING SITES

- Put hay, wood, and compost piles away from your home and other structures
- Get rid of trash and junk piles
- Keep yard well trimmed



For more information contact:

New Mexico Department of Health: 505-827-0006 or visit <https://nmhealth.org/about/erd/ideb/zdp/hps/>

CDC Hantavirus Hotline: 877-232-3322 or visit <http://www.cdc.gov/hantavirus/>

Albuquerque Area Southwest Tribal Epidemiology Center (AASTEC): 505-764-0036 or visit www.aastec.net