

CDRS

Communicable Disease Reporting System

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE FACT SHEET **HANTAVIRUS**

Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome (HPS) is an infectious respiratory disease endemic to North and South America. It is caused by a virus generally known as the hantavirus. While the disease is frequently fatal, it can be very easily prevented.

Symptoms

- Symptoms develop in one to six weeks after exposure to aerosolized virus.
- The first symptoms are fever, chills, muscle aches, and sometimes nausea, vomiting, and abdominal pain. The muscle aches are often severe, and occur in the thighs, hips, back and sometimes the shoulder. Some patients will develop coughing and shortness of breath within a few days. Others may go for as long as a week with the other symptoms before developing a cough and shortness of breath, followed by the abrupt onset of respiratory distress, often severe and fatal.
- Extremely low blood pressure usually accompanies severe cases of hantavirus infection.

Transmission

- Only rodents carry the virus.
- A person may be exposed to hantavirus by inhaling dust after disturbing nests or breathing in closed spaces inhabited by infected mice.
- The deer mouse is the main carrier of hantavirus; however, other wild rodents can cause problems as well.
- The deer mouse can have the virus without showing any signs of being sick.
- Deer mice spread the virus in their urine, saliva, droppings, and nesting materials.

Treatment

- There is no specific treatment or cure.

Prevention

- Keep mice away from your home and workplace.
- Clear the area within 100 feet of your house of junk piles, debris or old cars where mice will nest. Keep weeds, brush and grass cut.
- Plug up, screen or cover all openings into your home that a mouse might get through (larger than 1/4 inch wide). Use steel wool to plug holes around the base of buildings.
- Stack firewood, lumber and hay 12 inches off the ground and as far away from the house as possible.
- Remove food sources and nesting places.
- Don't store pet food uncovered or in open feeding dishes. Store grains and animal feed in containers with tight fitting covers. Use a plastic trashcan with a lid for kitchen garbage and food scraps.
- Tightly cover outdoor garbage cans and raise them 12 inches off the ground.

All information is general in nature and is not intended to be used as a substitute for appropriate professional advice.

Franklin County



Board of Health

Report Disease With Ease - 24 hours a day

www.cdinfo.com

Columbus and Franklin County Communicable Disease Reporting System

c/o The Franklin County Board of Health, 280 East Broad Street, Columbus, OH 43215

(614) 719-8888 ♦ (614) 719-8890 fax ♦ cds@franklincountyohio.gov - email

