



Chelan-Douglas Health District

200 Valley Mall Parkway, East Wenatchee, WA 98802

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Chelan-Douglas Health District Confirms a Case of Hantavirus in a Chelan County Resident

East Wenatchee, WA.- The Chelan-Douglas Health District (CDHD) is notifying the community that a lab-confirmed case of Sin Nombre virus (SNV) Hantavirus has been identified in a Chelan County resident. There is no connection between this case and the recently reported [Andes Virus Hantavirus cases](#) associated with the MV Hondius cruise ship.

At this time, limited details are being released to protect the privacy of the individual and their family. Exposure most likely occurred in or around the home, where mice were reportedly encountered. Health officials remind community members to take precautions, especially during spring cleaning and when entering enclosed spaces where rodents may be present.

Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome (HPS) is a rare but serious respiratory disease caused by exposure to infected rodents or their droppings, urine, or saliva. People can become infected when virus particles become airborne and are breathed in, particularly while cleaning in cabins, campers, sheds, garages, unused vehicles, storage areas, barns, crawl spaces, or other enclosed areas where rodents have been present. Less commonly, people can also become infected by touching contaminated objects then touching their eyes, nose or mouth, or being bitten or scratched by an infected rodent. Any activity that puts you in contact with deer mouse droppings, urine, saliva, or nesting materials can place you at risk for infection. The type of Hantavirus found in rodents in the western United States, Sin Nombre virus, does not spread from person to person.

“Hantavirus infections are rare, but they can be severe. Counties in north central Washington do see occasional cases. There are typically one to five cases of Sin Nombre virus Hantavirus per year in Washington residents, seen throughout the state” said Dr. James Wallace, the Public Health Officer for CDHD. “Taking simple precautions while cleaning or working in areas where rodents may be present can significantly reduce the risk of exposure.”

What is Hantavirus

Hantavirus-infected deer mice (*Peromyscus maniculatus*) can excrete Sin Nombre virus in their urine, saliva, and droppings. There is no evidence that the type of Hantavirus present in WA (Sin Nombre virus) spreads from one person to another. Most infections occur when people stir up dust contaminated with rodent droppings, urine, or nesting materials. Local cases of Hantavirus are caused by the Sin Nombre virus, which is different than the Andes virus that has raised international concern after cases and exposure on a cruise ship.

Symptoms of Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome

Symptoms typically develop one to eight weeks after exposure and may initially resemble the flu. Early symptoms may include:

- Fever
- Fatigue

- Muscle aches, especially in the thighs, hips, back, and shoulders
- Headache
- Chills
- Dizziness
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or abdominal pain

Later symptoms may include:

- Coughing
- Shortness of breath
- Chest tightness
- Difficulty breathing

Hospital care is usually required. It is a serious disease and about one out of three people diagnosed with HPS have died.

Anyone experiencing these symptoms after possible rodent exposure should seek medical attention immediately and inform their healthcare provider about potential rodent exposure.

Spring Cleaning and Rodent Cleanup Safety Tips

CDHD urges residents to prevent contact with rodents and to use caution when cleaning areas that may contain rodent droppings or nesting materials.

DO:

- Air out enclosed spaces for at least 30 minutes before cleaning.
- Wear rubber, latex, or vinyl gloves, an N-95 or P-100 respirator, vent-less goggles, and disposable coveralls.
- Spray rodent droppings, urine, and nesting materials with a household disinfectant or newly made bleach solution and let soak for at least 5 minutes before cleaning.
- Use paper towels to wipe up contaminated materials.
- Dispose of waste including all items worn during clean up in a sealed double bagged garbage bag.
- Wash hands thoroughly after cleaning up.
- Seal holes and gaps around homes, garages, sheds, attics, crawl spaces, and outbuildings to help prevent rodents from entering.
- Store food, including pet food, in rodent-proof containers.
- Set snap traps if signs of rodents are present. Wear the above items (gloves, masks, goggles) to dispose of any rodents in traps. Double bag the trap and rodent and dispose into a sealed garbage bag.
- Consult a pest control company if a rodent infestation is suspected.

Information on how to protect yourself during the clean-up of heavy rodent infestation can be found here: [Safely Cleaning Up After Rodents-Preventing Hantavirus Infection](#).

DO NOT:

- Do not sweep or vacuum rodent droppings or nesting materials, as this can spread virus particles into the air.
- Do not stir up dust in areas where rodents have been active.
- Do not handle wild or rodents with bare hands.
- Do not sleep in cabins or buildings with signs of active rodent infestation until they have been properly

cleaned and ventilated.

For more information about Hantavirus and safe cleanup practices, visit our Hantavirus page at www.cdhd.wa.gov/Hantavirus or the [Washington State Department of Health](http://www.wa.gov/Health) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](http://www.cdc.gov).

For more public health updates, visit www.cdhd.wa.gov and follow us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/cdhd.wa), [X](https://twitter.com/cdhd_wa) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/cdhd_wa).

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