



Tips for rodent-proofing your residence:

- * Keep your home clean.
- * Properly store or dispose of unused food, including pet food.
- * Keep garbage cans tightly sealed.
- * Fill all structural holes with wire screening, steel wool or cement.
- * Set and maintain spring-loaded traps throughout the home—inside and outside.
- * Clear the immediate area around your house. Remove all grass, scrub and garbage.
- * Keep potential nesting sites (brush woodpiles, yard equipment, etc.) maintained and rodent-free.

Cleaning precautions

When cleaning a rodent-infested dwelling ...

- Open all doors and windows at least 30 minutes prior to cleaning. If the building is heavily infested or ventilation isn't possible, use an N95-rated disposable respirator.
- Spray all rodent droppings, nest materials and remains with a bleach solution and let them soak 5-10 minutes before cleaning with a mop, sponge or wet vacuum. Do not use a broom or conventional vacuum.
- Use a mixture of bleach and water (1 & 1/2 cups bleach to a gallon of water, or one part bleach to nine parts water). Always wear water-resistant gloves.
- When disposing of contaminated materials, first place them in a sealed plastic bag and take to an outdoor trash can.
- Wash your hands thoroughly after cleaning.



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Facts about Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome



**EL PASO COUNTY
PUBLIC HEALTH**

“Protecting and Promoting Public Health and Environmental Quality in the Community through People, Prevention, & Partnerships”

What is Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome?

Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome is an infectious respiratory disease common in North and South America. The



Deer mouse, *Peromyscus maniculatus*

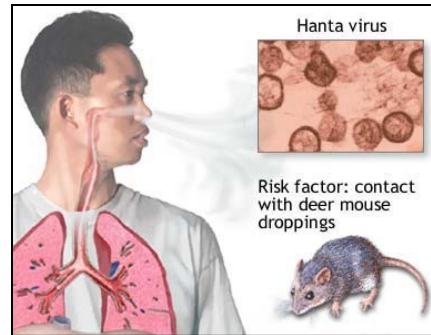
disease is carried by certain wild rodents—especially deer mice—and passed to humans through contact with rodents' infected urine, droppings or saliva.

The *Sin Nombre* virus is the most common form of hantavirus in the United States. In 1993, the first identified cases of *Sin Nombre* virus were reported in the Four Corners region—Southwestern United States.

What populations are most vulnerable?

People who are frequently exposed to infected rodent populations or rodent-infested areas are most likely to get the disease. Those who live and/or work in rural or semi-rural areas of Colorado—including portions of El Paso County—generally are at risk.

Deer mice and other potentially infected rodents typically are not found in urban or suburban settings.



How is hantavirus spread?

Hantavirus is spread through an infected rodent's urine, droppings and saliva, fragments of which can become airborne. Inhaling the particles from droppings or nesting materials can lead to infection.

What is the incubation period?

The incubation period (time from exposure to first symptoms) ranges from 1-6 weeks but averages 2-3 weeks.

What are the symptoms?

Some early symptoms include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle pain
- Severe abdominal, joint and lower back pain
- Nausea and vomiting

The most common symptom of hantavirus is difficulty breathing due to fluid buildup in the lungs. A persistent cough usually accompanies within a few days after becoming ill. Hantavirus is a serious illness that can result in respiratory failure and even death.

Is hantavirus treatable?

Currently, there are no effective drug treatments for hantavirus. If you think you have been exposed to the disease, see a physician immediately.

How can I identify deer mice?

All members of this species have white feet and a distinct separation between their brownish back and white belly. Deer mice also have notably long, bi-colored tails—dark on the top and white on the bottom.

What can I do to prevent exposure?

The best prevention measure is to avoid all contact with rodents. Keep them away from commonly accessed areas such as your house, garage and tool shed. Remember: Increased rodent populations raise the risk of infection.

Although it may be difficult to eliminate rodents from your residence, make every effort to monitor and reduce their presence. Special precautions also should be taken when cleaning or working in a heavily rodent-infested environment.

How can I help control the rodent population?

Successfully controlling the rodent population requires two primary steps:

1. Eliminating food sources.
2. Removing nesting areas/shelters.