Diversey
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CLEANPATH
PATHOGEN OVERVIEW

Hantavirus

General Description

Hantaviruses are members of the Bunyaviridae family of viruses, which are commonly found in rodent populations, such as rats and mice, and can spread to people from contact with the rodents, their urine, feces, and saliva, and their bedding. Bites or scratches from infected rodents can transmit the virus, but this is relatively rare. These viruses can cause severe illness and death from diseases such as Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome (HPS) and Hemorrhagic Fever with Renal Syndrome (HFRS). Hantavirus infections are particularly dangerous because they impede lung function.

People can become infected with Hantaviruses anywhere in the world where rodents are present. Rodents pass hantaviruses within their populations. Once infected, a rodent can secrete the virus in its urine, saliva, and feces for a long period of time and potentially for the rest of its life. The rodents are not believed to show symptoms of being infected, so visually discerning infected rodents from noninfected rodents is not possible.

In the late spring of 2026, several travelers on an international cruise ship were confirmed with the Andes strain of hantavirus, increasing requests for information. Per a statements issued by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization, the risk to the general public is extremely low.

Symptoms

HPS symptoms typically occur 1-8 weeks post exposure. Early symptoms include:

- Fatigue
- Fever
- Muscle aches, especially in large muscle groups

Some people with HPS also experience:

- Headache
- Dizziness
- Chills
- Abdominal issues, such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal pain

For some people, their infection does not progress past the initial symptoms. For others, the disease progresses, and additional symptoms appear. From 4 to 10 days after the initial symptoms, additional symptoms can appear, such as:

- Coughing
- Shortness of breath
- Tightness in the chest

When people with HPS develop respiratory symptoms, there is a 38% mortality rate, though this number has reached 50% in some reports.

HFRS symptoms typically develop within 1-2 weeks after exposure but can take up to 8 weeks in some cases. Initial symptoms include:

- Intense headaches

- Back and abdominal pain
- Fever/chills
- Nausea
- Blurred vision

Some people may develop flushing of the face, inflammation or redness of the eyes, or a rash. Later symptoms indicating a more serious form of the disease can include:

- Low blood pressure
- Shock/lack of blood flow
- Internal bleeding
- Acute kidney failure

HFRS is fatal in 1-15% of cases. Complete recovery can take up to several months.

Transmission

Hantavirus infection is a zoonotic disease, meaning most people become infected from exposure to infected rodents. The urine, saliva, and feces of rodents can be contaminated with hantavirus, and when the urine or feces are ingested or inhaled, people can be exposed to the virus and become infected. Touching contaminated objects, eating contaminated food, exposure to open cuts or sores on a person's skin, and being bitten or scratched by an infected rodent can also cause infection. Inhalation of dried urine, saliva, or feces containing the virus, such as through cleaning, can also cause transmission. People with cuts in their skin are more susceptible to being infected by contaminated urine, saliva, feces, or nesting materials, especially when not wearing gloves during cleaning.

Hantavirus is generally not transmitted from person to person, and casual contact, such as skin-to-skin contact without body fluid exchange is not believed to be capable of transmission. It is unclear whether a person needs to be symptomatic to transmit Hantavirus virus to other people. The exception is the Andes strain which appears to be more readily transmissible between people via respiratory secretions or bodily fluids.

Transmission is generally more common in rural areas, likely to have larger rodent populations but can occur in urban areas as well. Dogs and cats are not known to become infected but may bring infected rodents into homes. Dead rodents should always be handled with caution.

Prevention & Risk Reduction

Vector/Pest Control – Since most cases of are associated with exposure to infected rodents, the primary method of prevention is an effective pest control program, including control of trash and food. Ensuring buildings are properly sealed to prevent rodent entrance is also important.

Transmission-Based Precautions – For a suspected case of hantavirus infection, standard precautions are recommended by the CDC and WHO. Patients suspected of having hantavirus, however, should be placed in a private room given risk of environmental contamination. If the patient has Andes virus, the patient should be placed on airborne isolation. The use of gloves, fluid resistant gowns, eye protection, and respirator are recommended for direct patient contact.

Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection

Diligent and frequent cleaning and disinfection of environmental surfaces is a core strategy for the prevention and control of all infections. Hantaviruses are large, enveloped single-strand RNA spherical viruses that are easy to inactivate on environmental surfaces using an EPA or DIN approved disinfectant for use in healthcare. Cleaning rodent droppings, dried urine or saliva, and bedding can disseminate the virus onto people or in the air, where it can be inhaled or swallowed. Inhalation of the virus that has become airborne is believed to be the most common method of exposure for people.

People performing cleaning and disinfection activities should wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) to prevent exposure. At a minimum, people should wear gloves during cleaning and wash their hands thoroughly after removing gloves. Because inhalation of the virus from dried urine or saliva or droppings commonly occurs, additional PPE (gown, mask, goggles or face shield) is prudent when cleaning up an infestation and avoid dry cleaning methods, such as dry dusting, sweeping, or vacuuming. **While CDC nor WHO have published detailed cleaning and disinfection instructions, Diversey infection prevention experts recommend avoiding dry cleaning methods such as dry dusting, sweeping, or vacuuming. Wet/damp cleaning methods are preferred to reduce the likelihood of viral dispersal into the air.**

Soiled laundry (e.g., bedding, towels, personal clothing) should be handled in accordance with recommended standard healthcare practices, which include prompt containment in an appropriate laundry bag and avoidance of shaking or agitating in manner that may disperse infectious material. Standard healthcare laundering procedures are sufficient.

Additionally, while CDC and WHO do not specifically recommend single use products, they could be considered advantageous over relaundered substrates, given risks of handling soiled linens downstream and the possibility of uncovered used textiles on EVS carts. Most commercial laundering facilities should, of course, be using standard precautions in all linen handling, but disposal could be considered safer than laundering.

Specific disinfectant efficacy claims for hantavirus are not commonly available on EPA or DIN-registered products. Hantavirus is not uniquely addressed in CDC's Environmental Infection Control Guidelines, nor has it been yet added to the EPA List Q of emerging/reemerging viral pathogens. Therefore, standard cleaning and disinfection procedures should be followed, with attention to label claims for enveloped viruses (like influenza, Hepatitis B and HIV). **Be sure to check if different dilutions and contact/wet times are required for enveloped viruses.**

Diversey portfolio options are listed in the table below. For pathogen-specific efficacy questions, contact your disinfectant manufacturer.

PRODUCTS FOR THE UNITED STATES ARE LISTED HERE:







Label Item	Oxivir® Express Wipes	Oxivir®1 Wipes / RTU	Oxivir® Tb Wipes / RTU	Oxivir® Three 64	Oxivir® Five 16	Virex® Plus	Virex® II 256
EPA Reg	Wipes - 70627-77	Wipes - 70627-77 RTU - 70627-74	Wipes - 70627-60 RTU - 70627-56	70627-82	70627-58	6836-349-70627	70627-24
Technology	AHP®	AHP®	AHP®	AHP®	AHP®	Quat	Quat
Contact Time	30 Seconds	30 Seconds	1 Minute	Three Minutes	Five Minutes	5 Minutes 1:128	10 Minutes
Emerging Pathogen Language	Yes, Env, Large non-env and small non-enveloped	Yes, Env, Large non-env and small non-enveloped	Yes, Env, Large non-env and small non-enveloped	Enveloped; Large & Small Non-enveloped Viruses	Enveloped; Large & Small Non-enveloped Viruses	Enveloped; Large & Small Non-enveloped Viruses	Enveloped viruses




Label Item	Alpha-HP® Multi-Surface Disinfectant Cleaner	Avert®	Wide Range® II Non-Acid Disinfectant Washroom Cleaner Concentrate	Envy® Foaming Disinfectant Cleaner
EPA Reg	70627-62	Wipes - 70627-75 RTU - 70627-72	6836-75-70627	70627-35
Technology	AHP®	Sodium Hypochlorite	Quat	Quat
Contact Time	5 Min	1 Min	10 Minutes	10 Minutes
Emerging Pathogen Language	Yes; Enveloped, Small & Large Non-enveloped viruses	Enveloped; Large & Small Non-enveloped Viruses	Enveloped; Large Non-enveloped Viruses	Enveloped Virus, Large non-enveloped Virus

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References:

- https://www.cdc.gov/hantavirus/about/index.html
- You Can Prevent Hantavirus—How to Protect Yourself and Your Family from Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome in the United States
- https://www.cdc.gov/hantavirus/hcp/clinical-overview/hps.html
- https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/hantavirus
- https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/hantaviruses.html

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