

Preventing Hantavirus In The Workplace



What is Hantavirus?

- Hantavirus is a severe and sometimes fatal respiratory disease
- In Colorado, the deer mouse is the primary carrier of the virus that causes Hantavirus



How do people get Hantavirus?

People get Hantavirus from infected deer mice, which shed a virus in their urine and droppings. Exposure can include:

- Breathing in the virus when dust or other small particles contaminated with mouse urine or droppings are stirred up into the air
- Touching eyes, nose or mouth after touching an object or surface contaminated with rodent urine or droppings
- Below is a picture of what deer mouse droppings look like. If you see this or mouse urine in the field, follow the clean-up tips



How can I prevent Hantavirus?

Eliminate or minimize contact with rodents in your workplace or out in the field



Seal

- Seal holes and gaps around doors, windows and pipes to keep rodents out



Trap

- Place and routinely check snap traps to remove existing rodents



Clean

- Reduce rodent food sources by storing food in tightly sealed containers
- Eliminate materials in which rodents may nest such as boxes, newspapers and wood piles
- Disinfect areas where dead mice, droppings urine or nests are found

What are the symptoms of Hantavirus?

The first symptoms typically develop one to two weeks after exposure, but may develop up to six weeks post-exposure. Early symptoms can be easily confused with the flu. If you have had an exposure and are experiencing these symptoms, seek medical attention immediately:

- fever
- muscle aches
- vomiting
- nausea
- abdominal pain
- headache
- dizziness
- chills
- diarrhea

Clean-Up Tips:

1. If possible, air out the work space prior to starting clean-up activities
2. DO NOT sweep or vacuum in areas where mouse urine, droppings or nests may be present
3. Use only wet-cleaning methods, such as a mop or sponge, to minimize the chance of aerosolizing the virus
4. Proper use of an N95 respirator will further decrease your risk of exposure
5. Wear latex or rubber gloves during cleaning, and wash hands with soap and water when done
6. Spray contaminated area with disinfectant or a mixture of bleach and water (follow the label directions) and let soak for at least 10 minutes

For more information on Hantavirus in the workplace call **303-692-2700** or visit :

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/hantavirus>



COLORADO
Department of Public
Health & Environment