



# HANTAVIRUS PRECAUTIONS AND BEST PRACTICES



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Loss Control and Prevention Section

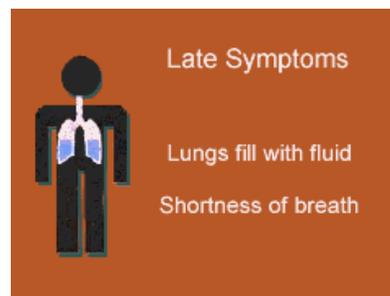
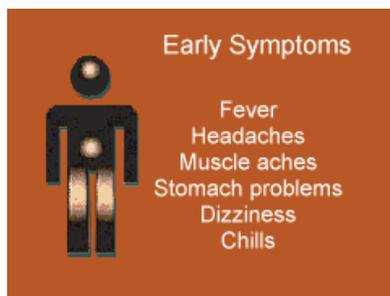
Contact [LossControl@ceo.lacounty.gov](mailto:LossControl@ceo.lacounty.gov) for additional information

## Background

The Hantavirus is a virus that causes a very serious lung infection in humans known as Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS). The virus is transmitted from infected rodents to humans through inhalation of aerosolized droppings, urine or saliva. Other methods of transmission include bites, contact with mucous membranes or non-intact skin, or eating food contaminated by urine, droppings or saliva from infected rodents.

## Symptoms

Symptoms develop between one and five weeks after the exposure. Early symptoms of HPS include fatigue, fever and muscle aches, especially in the large muscle groups—thighs, hips, back, and sometimes shoulders. There may also be headaches, dizziness, chills, and abdominal problems such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal pain. The late symptoms of HPS appear approximately four to 10 days after the initial phase of illness and include coughing and shortness of breath. Anyone displaying HPS symptom should seek medical attention immediately.



## Best Practices

The current best approach for prevention of HPS is to keep rodents from colonizing indoors by repairing screens and cracks in walls and using safe clean-up procedures for rodent waste and nesting materials.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends the following for individuals who are cleaning areas where evidence of mice infestation is found:

- Wear half-facepiece air-purifying (negative-pressure) respirators, or powered air-purifying respirators (PAPRs), equipped with N-100 or P-100 filters, when performing clean-up operations, removing rodents from traps or handling rodents in the affected area.

- Do not permit dust to become airborne (by dry sweeping or vacuuming up droppings, urine or nesting materials).
- Thoroughly wet contaminated areas with disinfectant (i.e. detergent, 10% bleach solution) to deactivate the virus. Once everything is wet, remove contaminated materials with a damp towel and mop or sponge the area with the disinfectant.
- Spray dead rodents with disinfectant. Double-bag the rodent along with all cleaning materials and throw out in the appropriate waste stream (contact your local or state health department regarding the appropriate waste stream).
- Disinfect gloves with disinfectant or soap and water before taking them off. After taking off the clean gloves, thoroughly wash hands with soap and warm water.
- Open areas that have been closed for a long period of time and allow them to air out before cleaning.