

Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome

Identification

Early warning signs include:

- Fever and chills
- Dizziness
- Nausea, vomiting, and abdominal pain
- Muscle aches and head aches

After 4-10 days of infection:

- Respiratory distress
- Shortness of breath
- Lungs fill with fluid

Infectious Agents

The virus responsible for Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome (HPS) is the *Hantavirus*.

Occurrence

Anyone who comes in contact with infected rodents is susceptible to the disease.

Reservoir

Deer mice, cotton rats, rice rats, and white-footed mice are all carriers. Humans may have the disease but cannot pass it on to another human.

Mode of Transmission

Mainly transmitted through the air as an aerosol and then breathed in by a human. The virus becomes an aerosol (aerosolization) mostly when cleaning stirs up particles of rodent urine, droppings, or saliva. It can be spread by rodent bites or by eating food that has been contaminated by rodent urine.

Incubation Period

Unknown, symptoms seem to develop 1-5 weeks after exposure.

Period of Communicability

Unknown, cannot be spread from human to human but can be spread from rodent to human at any time.

Susceptibility

Anyone, healthy or not, can contract the disease. This disease spreads equally over all ethnicities and age groups.

Control

Prevention

Minimize contact with rodents and objects rodents have come in contact with. When cleaning previously or currently rodent infested areas, wear gloves and use a wet rag and disinfectant to clean. Use a mixture of 1 cup bleach to 10 cups water. Never sweep or dust as this will cause aerosolization.

Treatment

No treatment, cure, or vaccine is available. If recognized early, infected persons can be put in intensive care and intubated and given oxygen therapy during the worst respiratory distress.