

# Hantavirus

## Hantavirus

Hantavirus is a serious disease contracted by humans from exposure to the droppings of several common rodents. Deer

Mice have been proven to carry Hantavirus. You will find mice in nestboxes in the spring and fall especially near grain fields. A study of Deer Mice was done at Shilo Manitoba were 50% of captured mice had Hantavirus.

One person at McAuly, and one person from Hamiota died from Hantavirus. And in young Minnedosa man almost died after contracting Hantavirus. Therefore before encountering mice in nestboxes it is a good idea to be aware of Hantavirus and the precautions which can help prevent getting it.

The virus is carried by Deer mice, White-footed Mice, Cotton rats, and Rice rats. These rodents are found almost everywhere in North America. They shed the virus in their urine, droppings, and saliva.

Hantavirus received its first significant publicity in 1993 during an outbreak in the southwestern part of United States. Investigating the disease, medical experts determined that Hantavirus has been present here since 1959.

Cases of the disease have been reported in all states west of the Mississippi River and most western provinces with a significant death rate. Humans acquire the disease mainly by breathing the air contaminated with it so you do not want to stir up rodent droppings or nesting materials.

### How do you prevent Hantavirus?

- Use a N100 mask. Remove it last when cleaning up.
- Put on rubber gloves before cleaning up rodent infestations in your nestboxes or anywhere else.
- Don't stir up dust by sweeping or vacuuming droppings, urine, or nesting materials.
- Instead, thoroughly wet the contaminated areas with a liquid to deactivate the virus. It is best to use a solution of one part bleach to nine parts water. One way to clean a large area is to use a small pressure sprayer dedicated for this solution only (Avoid getting this on your clothing or other items that may be damaged).
- When everything is wet, take up the contaminated materials with a damp cloth, then mop or sponge the area with the disinfectant.
- Spray dead rodents with disinfectant, then double bag them in plastic, along with the cleaning materials, and bury or burn them.
- Disinfect your gloves before you remove them; use disinfectant, soap and water. After taking off your gloves, thoroughly wash your hands in soap and water.

More information can be found by searching for "Hantavirus + Manitoba" or go to Manitoba Health at <http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/cdc/fs/Hantavirusfs.pdf> .

