



Media Release

Hantavirus Awareness for Spring 2010

As the season for spring cleaning sneaks up on us, the Casper-Natrona County Health Department would like to encourage everyone to use caution if you encounter rodent nests or droppings. Hantavirus is carried by rodents and passed on to humans through infected rodent urine, saliva, or droppings. It is spread to humans when the virus gets into the air as mist from urine or saliva, or dust from feces. Breathing in the virus is the most common way of becoming infected; however, you can also become infected by touching your mouth or nose after handling contaminated materials. Hantavirus is NOT spread from person to person.

Hantavirus is killed by cleaning with a bleach solution and most household disinfectants.

- Wear rubber, latex, vinyl or plastic gloves.
- Do not stir up dust by vacuuming, sweeping, or by any other means.
- Spray urine and droppings with a disinfectant or a mixture of bleach and water. Make sure you get the urine and droppings very wet and allow to soak for 5 minutes.
 - **Bleach solution:** mix 1 and ½ cups of unscented household bleach in 1 gallon of water.
- Use a paper towel to wipe up the urine or droppings.
- Throw the paper towel into a garbage bag, tie off the bag and throw it into a dumpster.
- Mop or sponge the area with a disinfectant or bleach solution; then discard the mop head or sponge.
- Disinfect gloves with disinfectant or soap and water before taking them off.
- After taking off the cleaned gloves, thoroughly wash your hands with soap and warm water.

To clean cabins, sheds, barns, or other outbuildings:

- Open all doors and windows. Leave them open for 30 minutes before cleaning.
- If you see rodent droppings, follow the steps above to clean them.
- Be sure to clean countertops, cabinets, and drawers in cabins with a disinfectant.
- Inspect furniture and bedding for rodent droppings before using.

Source: Center for Disease Control and Prevention

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