

Topic: Rodent Safety & Clean Up

Hantavirus is a life-threatening disease spread to humans by rodents; it has symptoms similar to influenza. Usual carriers of hantavirus are deer mice. The virus is found in the urine and feces, and in dried carcasses, and it is believed to be transmitted to humans through contaminated dust from mice nests or droppings.



Rodents look for building entrances during all months of the year. You will tend to see an increased movement if nearby construction occurs. It is important to regularly inspect buildings for access areas. Ensure doors and windows remain closed or have screens on them.

It is important to ensure buildings are regularly cleaned and that food areas are maintained. Food and equipment used to cook food must be stored in a secure location and not left in open areas. Ensuring proper housekeeping is important to prevent rodents.

Rodent droppings should be handled with utmost care. Particularly after they have dried, feces can be reservoirs of a variety of dangerous diseases and viruses, in addition to hantavirus. These dry droppings break apart upon contact and release airborne particles that may enter your nasal passages, causing infection.

Do not handle droppings at work or in your home without first taking preventive measures.

Areas of contamination must be sprayed and soaked with a disinfectant solution. As the disease is transmitted through dust, keeping the area wet will prevent airborne contamination.

Avoid sweeping or vacuuming the location when dry, as this may lead to further release and dispersal of virus particles.



When cleaning up rodent feces personal protective equipment must be worn. This includes a disposable N95 respirator, disposable gloves and eye protection.

All workers who use an N95 disposable respirator must be annually fit tested.



Feces must be disposed of in double sealed plastic bags. Gloves and mask must also be sealed in a plastic bag and disposed of.

After removal of the personal protective equipment it is important to thoroughly wash your face and hands with soap and water.

Ensure safe work procedures are reviewed and understood prior to removing even small amounts of rodent feces.

In the event large amounts of rodent feces is found or nesting areas are identified it is best to contact a local pest control professional to ensure appropriate cleanup and removal.