

SYMPTOMS

Hantaviruses are associated with rodent-transmitted disease, with general symptoms of infection typically appearing 1-8 weeks after exposure. These may include **fever, muscle aches, headache, dizziness, chills, nausea, vomiting, and abdominal pain** ^[1]. Depending on the particular virus, severe cases may develop one of the below syndromes ^[2].

Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome [HPS] – coughing, shortness of breath, chest tightness and other cardiopulmonary symptoms

Haemorrhagic Fever w. Renal Syndrome [HFRS] – may develop symptoms of acute shock and kidney failure

Nephrophathia epidemica [NE] - similar to HPS but milder



TRANSMISSION

Distribution and Spread

There is a wide variety of hantavirus species, with each particular type being related to a particular host rodent, within a unique geographical area. All hantaviruses are transmitted to humans through contact with infected rodent urine, faeces, or saliva. This could be through inhalation of contaminated dust, food contamination, or a bite from an infected rodent. ^[1]

RECOMMENDATION

Treatment

There is no specific treatment for hantavirus, so treatment is focused on managing the symptoms and preventing complications. This typically involves supportive care, such as oxygen therapy and medications to control symptoms.

Prevention

To prevent hantavirus infection, it is important to control rodent populations, through:

- Promoting 'community hygiene' to discourage rodents from entering homes
- Proper disposal of garbage, in designated areas
- Adequate food storage in rodent-proof containers

One should also:

- Wear long and protective clothing when cleaning areas where rodents are present
- Practicing good hygiene practices when handling food
- Frequent hand washing using soap

1. Hantavirus [Internet]. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2019. Available from: <https://www.cdc.gov/hantavirus/index.html> (accessed December 24, 2022).

2. Hantavirus [Internet]. European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. 2017. Available from: <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/hantavirus-infection/facts> (accessed December 27, 2022).