

Transmission

- Breathing in rodent urine and droppings (faeces) that are stirred up into the air
- Touching the eyes, nose or mouth after touching rodent droppings, urine, or nests
- Rodent bite
- Rarely by close contact with people sick with HPS (for some germs in South America only)

Symptoms

- Tiredness, fever and muscle aches.
- Coughing and shortness of breath.
- Around four out of ten people with HPS will die.

Prevention

- Prevent rodents from entering houses or accessing stored food and water (including pet and animal food)
- Follow recommended environmental hygiene practices (for example, dispose of rubbish in rodent-proof containers, minimize possible nesting sites)
- Follow recommended kitchen hygiene practices (for example, clean floors and wash dishes and utensils immediately)
- Introduce social mobilization and behaviour change communication
- Use personal protective equipment (PPE) and disinfectants when cleaning up rodent droppings and nesting materials
- Use rodent traps inside and outside homes
- Properly disinfect and dispose of dead rodents

Vulnerable people

- People who come in contact with rodents carrying virus and their droppings and urine

If an epidemic occurs

- Detect people who are sick with HPS quickly and refer them to health facilities
- Increase social mobilization and behaviour change communication
- Promote handwashing with soap
- Prevent rodents from entering houses or accessing stored food and water (including pet or animal food)
- Use rodent traps inside and outside homes
- Properly disinfect and dispose of dead rodents

- Follow recommended environmental hygiene practices. (For example, dispose of rubbish in rodent-proof containers, minimize possible nesting sites)
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Community-based assessment - questions

Make a map of the community and mark the information you gather on the map. Record other details.

- When did people start to fall sick with HPS?
- How many people have fallen sick with HPS? Where?
- How many people have died? Where?
- How many people live in the affected community or area? How many children under 5 years of age live in the area?
- Who and where are the vulnerable people?
- How do people in the community store their food? (Are rats or other rodents able to eat it or contaminate it?)
- How do people in the community dispose of rubbish and solid waste?
- Have the authorities established a vector control programme?
- Do community members have any risky habits or practices when they come into contact with live or dead rodents?
- How do people in the community dispose of dead rats? (For example, are they buried, thrown in the river, burned?)
- Are there handwashing facilities in the community and at health centres? Are soap and water always available?
- Where are the local health facilities and services? (Include traditional and community carers from whom people seek advice.)
- What are the community's habits, practices and beliefs about caring for and feeding sick people? When babies and infants are sick, do women continue to breastfeed them?
- Is a social mobilization or health promotion programme in place?
- Which sources of information do people use most?
- Are rumours or is misinformation about HPS spreading in the community?

Volunteer actions

See the following action tools for more information on what actions to take against hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (hps):

- 1 - Community-based surveillance
- 2 - Community mapping
- 3 - Communicating with the community
- 4 - Referral to health facilities
- 5 - Volunteer protection and safety
- 19 - Psychosocial support (Psychological first aid (PFA))
- 29 - Hygiene promotion
- 34 - Handwashing with soap

- 38 - Waste disposal and clean-up campaigns
- 39 - Preparing and using disinfectants
- 43 - Social mobilization and behaviour change