NORTH Dakota | Health & Human Services
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Health Alert Network | Health Advisory | May 19, 2026

2026 Hantavirus Outbreak: Testing for Potential Infection

The North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services (ND HHS) is providing this Health Alert Network (HAN) Health Update from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (see below) to inform clinicians and health departments about testing available for patients with suspected hantavirus infection to include Andes virus. ND HHS first issued a health advisory regarding this outbreak on May 12, 2026: https://www.hhs.nd.gov/sites/default/files/documents/DOH Legacy/EPR/HAN Alerts/2026/20260512-hantavirus-han-exclusion.pdf.

North Dakota clinicians should contact ND HHS immediately to report a suspected Andes virus case and for assistance with diagnostic testing for Andes virus. North Dakota clinicians should be aware that close contacts to a confirmed hantavirus case from this cluster are residing in the state and being monitored by ND HHS for symptoms for 42 days from their last exposure.

Hantavirus is a mandatory reportable condition in North Dakota. Providers should contact the North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services Disease Control and Forensic Pathology Section immediately at 701-328-2378 if hantavirus is suspected in a patient. ND HHS Laboratory Services Section offers hantavirus testing. Providers can call 701-328-6272 with any questions regarding specimen collection and laboratory testing. Isolate and manage patients with exposure risks and symptoms compatible with hantavirus in a healthcare facility. If a specimen collected within 72 hours of symptom onset tests negative for IgM and IgG antibodies, a second specimen collected more than 72 hours after symptom onset should be submitted to rule out hantavirus infection. Detection of hantavirus IgM antibodies indicates recent infection, whereas IgG antibodies indicate past infection.

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May 18, 2026
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2026 Hantavirus Outbreak: Testing for Potential Infection

Summary

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is issuing this Health Alert Network (HAN) Health Update to inform clinicians and health departments about testing available for patients with suspected hantavirus infection to include Andes virus. CDC first issued a Health Advisory (CDCHAN-00528) about this outbreak on May 8, 2026. Hantaviruses are a group of viruses that typically spread to people who come in contact with sylvatic rodents. These viruses can cause severe illness or death in humans. Andes virus, a type of hantavirus endemic in South America, is the only type of hantavirus that is known to spread from person to person. Several other New World hantaviruses are endemic to the United States and are not transmissible from person to person. New World hantaviruses can cause hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS), a potentially serious disease that can cause damage to the lungs.

On May 2, 2026, an outbreak of Andes virus on a cruise ship was reported to the World Health Organization (WHO). This outbreak has raised the possibility of cases being imported to the United States. As of May 18, no confirmed cases of Andes virus associated with the outbreak on the cruise ship have been reported in the United States. Therefore, **the overall risk to the American public is still considered extremely low at this time**. CDC and health departments in several states are monitoring the health of U.S. passengers from the ship and U.S. air travel contacts of symptomatic ship passengers who were subsequently confirmed to have Andes virus infection. This Health Update informs clinicians about testing and consultation that are available for Andes virus and other hantaviruses endemic to the United States, South America, and other nations.

Background

On May 2, 2026, WHO was notified of a cluster of severe acute respiratory illness (SARI) among passengers and crew aboard the M/V Hondius cruise ship in the Atlantic Ocean. On May 6, 2026, WHO confirmed that the cluster was caused by Andes virus, a hantavirus endemic in areas of South America that can cause hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS). Andes virus is the only hantavirus known to spread from person to person. This type of transmission is rare for hantaviruses and is generally associated with prolonged close contact. As of May 15, WHO has reported 10 cases (8 of them laboratory-confirmed), including 3 deaths.

Hantaviruses cause two syndromes. Hantaviruses found in the Western Hemisphere are often referred to as New World hantaviruses and can cause HPS. Several New World hantaviruses that do not spread person to person are endemic in the United States. These include Sin Nombre virus, the virus mostly commonly associated with U.S. HPS cases. In addition to HPS, hantaviruses can cause other clinically significant illness. Hemorrhagic fever with renal syndrome (HFRS) is a group of clinically similar illnesses that affect the kidneys. HFRS is caused by another group of hantaviruses, often referred to as Old World hantaviruses, that are found mostly in Europe and Asia. However, Seoul virus, a type of hantavirus that causes HFRS, is found worldwide, including in the United States. Non-HPS hantavirus infection can also occur, in which patients experience non-specific viral symptoms without cardio-pulmonary symptoms.

Hantavirus infections can occur year-round but are reported more frequently during the spring and summer months when rodent populations increase and people may have greater exposure to rodent-infested environments such as cabins, sheds, campsites, and homes. The most common hantavirus that causes HPS in the United States is spread by the deer mouse. Andes virus is spread primarily by the long-tailed pygmy rice rat (*Oligoryzomys longicaudatus*).

Recommendations for Clinicians

- **Consider Andes virus** infection in patients who
    - (1) have symptoms compatible with hantavirus infection, AND
    - (2) were aboard the M/V Hondius cruise ship OR had direct contact with someone associated with the M/V Hondius Andes virus outbreak.
- Contact your state, tribal, local, or territorial health department immediately to report a suspected Andes virus case and for assistance with diagnostic testing for Andes virus.
- Know that assays designed to specifically detect Andes virus may not detect other New World hantaviruses endemic in the United States.

- **Consider infection with other New World hantaviruses** in patients who
    - (1) have symptoms compatible with hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS) or non-HPS hantavirus infection, AND
    - (2) have a history of known or suspected exposure to sylvatic rodents or rodent excreta (e.g., urine, droppings, or nesting materials).
- **Consider infection with Old World hantaviruses** in patients who
    - (1) have symptoms consistent with hemorrhagic fever with renal syndrome (HFRS), AND
    - (2) have a history of known or suspected exposure to sylvatic rodents or rodent excreta (e.g., urine, droppings, or nesting materials).
- Test for non-Andes hantavirus in patients who have symptoms compatible with hantavirus infection and have a history of rodent exposure, but who are not associated with the M/V Hondius Andes virus outbreak.
- **Consult** with CDC's Viral Special Pathogens Branch (VSPB) to discuss hantavirus diagnostic testing by calling the CDC Emergency Operations Center at **770-488-7100** and requesting VSPB's on-call epidemiologist. VSPB cannot accept specimens without prior consultation.

For More Information

General Resources

- About Hantavirus | CDC
- About Andes Virus | CDC

Clinician Resources

- Clinician Brief: Hemorrhagic Fever with Renal Syndrome | CDC
- Hantavirus Disease Trainings for Healthcare Providers | CDC

Health Department Resources

- Interim Guidance for Public Health Assessment and Management of People with Potential Exposure to Andes Virus | Hantavirus | CDC
- Hantavirus Case Definition and Reporting | CDC

References

1. World Health Organization (WHO). Disease Outbreak News: Hantavirus cluster linked to cruise ship travel, Multi-country. May 13,

2026. https://www.who.int/emergencies/disease-outbreak-news/item/2026-DON599
2. Martínez VP, Valeria, Di Paola N, Alonso DO, et al. "Super-Spreaders" and Person-to-Person Transmission of Andes Virus in Argentina. *New England Journal of Medicine*. 383. 2230-2241. 10.1056/NEJMoa2009040. 2020; 383(23):2230-2241. https://doi.org/10.1056/nejmoa2009040. PMID:33264545.