



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

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FIRST LOCALLY ACQUIRED HUMAN CASE OF HANTAVIRUS REPORTED

County Health and Human Services Agency, Department of Environmental Health Continue Surveillance

The San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency reports the first locally acquired human case of hantavirus pulmonary syndrome in San Diego County.

The patient, a 32-year-old East County woman, has recovered. In late May the woman initially came down with flu-like symptoms, which rapidly progressed to shortness of breath and respiratory distress.

“While there is no specific treatment for hantavirus, the woman received good supportive care at a local hospital, and was recently discharged well on her way to full recovery”, said Nancy Bowen, M.D., San Diego County Public Health Officer.

Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome is caused by a virus carried by wild rodents, primarily deer mice. Over the past several years, the virus has been found in wild rodents in San Diego County. Infected rodents shed the virus in their droppings, urine and saliva. People most commonly become infected when they stir up and inhale airborne particles of contaminated rodent droppings, urine and saliva. The virus may also be spread by touching the mouth and nose after handling infected rodents or contaminated objects.

According to Dr. Bowen, the first signs of illness are similar to flu symptoms and include fatigue, fever and muscle aches; they may also include headache, dizziness, chills, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and abdominal pain. Later symptoms of hantavirus pulmonary syndrome include coughing, shortness of breath rapidly progressing to severe difficulty in breathing, and sometimes death.

Since the disease was first recognized in May 1993, there have been a total of 363 human cases of hantavirus pulmonary syndrome reported in the United States, as of June 6, 2004. A little over a third of those reported cases resulted in death. This is the first confirmed human case for California this year, bringing the total number of cases in California to 41 since 1993.

Click for a [Hantavirus fact sheet](#), or visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention web site, www.cdc.gov, and click on Diseases and Conditions. For information on rodent control, contact the Department of Environmental Health’s Vector Surveillance and Control Program at (858) 694-2888, or visit the web site at <http://www.co.san-diego.ca.us/deh/index.html>.

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