

Andes Hantavirus EMS Health Alert



MedStar Washington Hospital Center | Children's National Hospital | Regional Emerging Special Pathogen Treatment Center



In May 2026, the WHO issued a **situation report** about a cluster of cases of Andes hantavirus among passengers on a cruise ship. Andes hantavirus is a rare but serious disease that can be deadly and is the only known hantavirus with confirmed person-to-person transmission. EMS clinicians should be mindful of the potential for Andes hantavirus in patients who have had contact with rodents, have recently traveled to South America and/or Antarctica on a cruise ship or have had contact with someone known to have Andes hantavirus.

1. Identify: When to Suspect



Travel to Argentina and the south Atlantic to Antarctica, or contact with a known hantavirus patient or rodents, within the last 14 days

and

Symptoms:

- Fever
- Chills
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Chest pain
- Abdominal pain
- Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea



2. Isolate: Protecting Personnel and the Public



Patient Isolation

- Place face mask on patient



PPE for Suspected Cases: Contact + Airborne Precautions

- Impermeable gown (AAMI Level 3 or 4) or coverall
- Gloves
- Faceshield or goggles
- Fit-tested N95 or PAPR
- Strict isolation precautions, including AIIR when available

3. Inform: Notify Receiving Facility

Pre-hospital clinicians should call or radio ahead to receiving facilities of their concerns for hantavirus. In order to limit exposures, do not bring the patient into the ED until approved by the ED team. Follow your agency's operational guidelines for reporting within your EMS agency.



4. Post-Transport Issues

Transport units and equipment should be cleaned and disinfected using an EPA-registered hospital-grade disinfectant while wearing PPE. Soiled laundry and trash should be handled following the agency's guidelines for special pathogens.



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Additional References: [CDC Clinical Overview](#) [NETEC](#)