

Wellness Articles

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If you would like to be added to the distribution list for these articles, please email: Rebecca.johnson2@albertahealthservices.ca. You will receive a monthly email containing articles for the upcoming four weeks.

An archive of past wellness articles is available at <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/9966.asp>

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Content provided by: Alberta Health Services – Andrea Juarez

Hantavirus Protection

If you're cleaning your yard and find mice, be careful.

Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome (HPS) is a potentially fatal respiratory illness. It is caused by Hantavirus, a virus found in the saliva, urine and droppings of deer mice.

People can get Hantavirus by breathing in contaminated dust or particles from the mouse urine or droppings, or by being bit by a deer mouse.

Symptoms occur two to three weeks after being exposed to the virus. They are similar to the flu and may include headache, fever and chills, muscle aches and shortness of breath, as fluid builds up in the lungs.

If you or someone you know shows symptoms and has been exposed to deer mice, seek medical care immediately.

And try to avoid exposure in the first place.

“The best way to prevent Hantavirus is avoiding contact with deer mice. Eliminate their potential food sources. Keep garbage covered in pest-proof containers and set traps to catch rodents at your home and workplace,” says Alberta Health Services public health inspector Nicole MacIntyre.

“If there is evidence of rodents, you may need to call a professional exterminator.”

If you have to clean the area where deer mice have been, do not stir up the dust by sweeping or vacuuming the nest or droppings. Wear rubber or vinyl gloves and spray the urine and droppings with a disinfectant. Use paper towel to pick up the waste and



dispose of promptly in the garbage. Thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water once you're done. For more information, search Hantavirus at ahs.ca.