



HANTAVIRUS

Department of Health and Human Services



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In May 1993, some healthy young people living in the southwestern United States suddenly had serious breathing problems. About half of them soon died. The first attempts to find the cause of their deaths were unsuccessful. During the weeks that followed, more people became sick, and some died. CDC researchers soon discovered that the illness was caused by a previously unknown kind of hantavirus. Hantaviruses are transmitted to people by certain mice and rats. To avoid getting sick from hantavirus, check cabins and campsites for signs of rodents. Don't sleep near woodpiles or garbage areas. The new disease caused by the virus is called hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS).

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