

Safely Cleaning Up After Rodents



PREVENTING HANTAVIRUS INFECTION

In Washington, **deer mice** can carry hantavirus, which can cause **Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome (HPS)** in humans. HPS is a severe, sometimes fatal respiratory disease. Deer mice can shed the virus in their urine, droppings, and saliva. Disturbing mouse nests, droppings, urine, or saliva, can create small particles that contain the virus in the air. People can be exposed to hantavirus by breathing in air that contains the virus. You can prevent those particles from getting into the air by not disturbing mouse nests or droppings, and using “wet cleaning methods.”

6 wet-cleaning steps to reduce the risk of hantavirus

If you identify a rodent nest, droppings, or infestation, it's important to clean up safely. When you're cleaning mouse-infested areas, use these steps to reduce the risk of infection:



Ventilate the space before cleaning by opening doors and windows for at least 30 minutes.

Avoid stirring up dust; don't use a leaf blower, vacuum, sweep, or use cleaning methods such as dry dusting.

Wear rubber, latex, vinyl, or nitrile (synthetic rubber) gloves.



Thoroughly wet any contaminated areas — including trapped or dead rodents, droppings, and nests — with a 10% bleach solution. Here's how to do it:

- Mix 1½ cups of household bleach in 1 gallon of cold water (or 1 part bleach to 9 parts water). Make this solution fresh before each use. Use a spray bottle to spray the affected area with bleach and water solution until very wet.
- Let everything soak for 5-10 minutes.
- Use paper towels or rags that can be discarded to pick up or wipe up rodents, nest material, mice, and/or droppings, and/or urine.
- Mop or sponge the area with the bleach solution.



Double-bag the dirty rags and any dead rodents and place them in a sealed garbage can.



Wash gloves with disinfectant or soap and water before removing them, then wash your hands with soap and water after removing your gloves.

