



To: CAHAN San Diego Participants

Date: May 19, 2026

From: Public Health Services

Health Alert Update #1: Testing for Potential Hantavirus Infection

Key Messages

- On May 8, 2026, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC](#)) issued a [Health Alert](#) and on May 11, [the California Department of Public Health \(CDPH\)](#) issued a [corresponding Health Alert](#) to inform clinicians and health departments about a new cluster of hantavirus disease caused by infection with [Andes virus](#) aboard the cruise ship M/V Hondius.
- On May 18, 2026, the [CDC issued a Health Alert](#) updating providers that assays designed to specifically detect Andes virus may not detect other New World hantaviruses endemic in the United States.
- Testing for Andes virus infection should only be considered in patients who
 - have symptoms compatible with hantavirus infection, AND
 - were aboard the M/V Hondius cruise ship OR had direct contact with someone associated with the M/V Hondius Andes virus outbreak.
- County of San Diego Public Health Services has confirmed with CDPH that no M/V Hondius cruise ship passengers or their direct close contacts have returned or will be returning to San Diego County.

Situation

On May 18, 2026, the [CDC issued a Health Alert](#) to announce an assay specific for Andes virus infection is available, but that assay is reserved for symptomatic M/V Hondius cruise ship passengers or their close contact. CDC reports that these passengers and their close contacts have been identified: None are San Diego County residents. CDC also reiterated that overall risk to the American public is still considered extremely low at this time.

Actions Requested

1. **Be aware** that assays designed to specifically detect Andes virus may not detect other New World hantaviruses endemic in the United States. For other patients with symptoms compatible with hantavirus infection and history of known or suspected exposure to sylvatic rodents or their excreta, consider endemic hantaviruses and test for non-Andes hantaviruses.
2. **Report** suspected hantavirus cases immediately to the County Epidemiology Program during office hours by calling (619) 692-8499 Monday-Friday 8AM-5PM and (858) 565-5255 after hours and on weekends.

Resources

- [Health Alert – May 12: Hantavirus Among Cruise Ship Passengers | COSD](#)

Thank you for your participation.

CAHAN San Diego

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2026 Hantavirus Outbreak: Testing for Potential Infection

MAY 18, 2026

AT A GLANCE

- Distributed via the CDC Health Alert Network
- May 18, 2026
- CDCHAN-00529



Summary

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is issuing this Health Alert Network (HAN) Health Update to inform clinicians and health departments about testing available for patients with suspected hantavirus infection to include Andes virus. CDC first issued a [Health Advisory](#) (CDCHAN-00528) about this outbreak on May 8, 2026. Hantaviruses are a group of viruses that typically spread to people who come in contact with sylvatic rodents. These viruses can cause severe illness or death in humans. Andes virus, a type of hantavirus endemic in South America, is the only type of hantavirus that is known to spread from person to person. Several [other](#) New World hantaviruses are endemic to the United States and are not transmissible from person to person. New World hantaviruses can cause hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS), a potentially serious disease that can cause damage to the lungs.

On May 2, 2026, an outbreak of Andes virus on a cruise ship was reported to the World Health Organization (WHO). This outbreak has raised the possibility of cases being imported to the United States. As of May 18, no confirmed cases of Andes virus associated with the outbreak on the cruise ship have been reported in the United States. Therefore, **the overall risk to the American public is still considered extremely low at this time**. CDC and health departments in several states are monitoring the health of U.S. passengers from the ship and U.S. air travel contacts of symptomatic ship passengers who were subsequently confirmed to have Andes virus infection. This Health Update informs clinicians about testing and consultation that are available for Andes virus and other hantaviruses endemic to the United States, South America, and other nations.


Background

On May 2, 2026, WHO was notified of a cluster of severe acute respiratory illness (SARI) among passengers and crew aboard the M/V Hondius cruise ship in the Atlantic Ocean. On May 6, 2026, WHO confirmed that the cluster was caused by Andes virus, a hantavirus endemic in areas of South America that can cause hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS). Andes virus is the only hantavirus known to spread from person to person. This type of transmission is rare for hantaviruses and is generally associated with prolonged [close contact](#). As of May 15, WHO has reported 10 cases (8 of them laboratory-confirmed), including 3 deaths.

Hantaviruses cause two syndromes. Hantaviruses found in the Western Hemisphere are often referred to as New World hantaviruses and can cause HPS. Several New World hantaviruses that do not spread person to person [are endemic in the United States](#). These include Sin Nombre virus, the virus mostly commonly associated with U.S. HPS cases. In addition to HPS, hantaviruses can cause other clinically significant illness. [Hemorrhagic fever with renal syndrome](#) (HFRS) is a group of clinically similar illnesses that affect the kidneys. HFRS is caused by another group of hantaviruses, often referred to as Old World hantaviruses, that are found mostly in Europe and Asia. However, Seoul virus, a type of hantavirus that causes HFRS, is found worldwide, including in the United States. Non-HPS hantavirus infection can also occur, in which patients experience non-specific viral symptoms without cardio-pulmonary symptoms.

Hantavirus infections can occur year-round but are reported more frequently during the [spring and summer months](#) when rodent populations increase and people may have greater exposure to rodent-infested environments such as cabins, sheds, campsites, and homes. The most common hantavirus that causes HPS in the United States is spread by the deer mouse. Andes virus is spread primarily by the long-tailed pygmy rice rat (*Oligoryzomys longicaudatus*).

Recommendations for Clinicians

- **Consider Andes virus** infection in patients who
 - (1) have symptoms compatible with hantavirus infection, AND
 - (2) were aboard the M/V Hondius cruise ship OR had direct contact with someone associated with the M/V Hondius Andes virus outbreak.
- Contact your [state, tribal, local, or territorial health department](#)  immediately to report a suspected Andes virus case and for assistance with diagnostic testing for Andes virus.
- Know that assays designed to specifically detect Andes virus may not detect other New World hantaviruses endemic in the United States.
- **Consider infection with other New World hantaviruses** in patients who
 - (1) have symptoms compatible with [hantavirus pulmonary syndrome \(HPS\) or non-HPS](#) hantavirus infection, AND
 - (2) have a history of known or suspected exposure to sylvatic rodents or rodent excreta (e.g., urine, droppings, or nesting materials).
- **Consider infection with Old World hantaviruses** in patients who
 - (1) have symptoms consistent with [hemorrhagic fever with renal syndrome \(HFRS\)](#), AND
 - (2) have a history of known or suspected exposure to sylvatic rodents or rodent excreta (e.g., urine, droppings, or nesting materials).
- Test for non-Andes hantavirus in patients who have symptoms compatible with hantavirus infection and have a history of rodent exposure, but who are not associated with the M/V Hondius Andes virus outbreak.
- **Consult** with CDC's Viral Special Pathogens Branch (VSPB) to discuss hantavirus diagnostic testing by calling the CDC Emergency Operations Center at **770-488-7100** and requesting VSPB's on-call epidemiologist. VSPB cannot accept specimens without prior consultation.

For More Information

General Resources

- [About Hantavirus | CDC](#)
- [About Andes Virus | CDC](#)




Clinician Resources

- [Clinician Brief: Hemorrhagic Fever with Renal Syndrome | CDC](#)
- [Hantavirus Disease Trainings for Healthcare Providers | CDC](#)

Health Department Resources

- [Interim Guidance for Public Health Assessment and Management of People with Potential Exposure to Andes Virus | Hantavirus | CDC](#)
- [Hantavirus Case Definition and Reporting | CDC](#)

References

1. World Health Organization (WHO). Disease Outbreak News: Hantavirus cluster linked to cruise ship travel, Multi-country. May 13, 2026. <https://www.who.int/emergencies/disease-outbreak-news/item/2026-DON599> 
2. Martínez VP, Valeria, Di Paola N, Alonso DO, et al. "Super-Spreaders" and Person-to-Person Transmission of Andes Virus in Argentina. *New England Journal of Medicine*. 383. 2230-2241. 10.1056/NEJMoa2009040. 2020; 383(23):2230-2241. <https://doi.org/10.1056/nejmoa2009040> . PMID:[33264545](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33264545/) .

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) protects people's health and safety by preventing and controlling diseases and injuries; enhances health decisions by providing credible information on critical health issues; and promotes healthy living through strong partnerships with local, national and international organizations.

[U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES](#) 

HAN message types

- **Health Alert:** Conveys the highest level of importance about a public health incident.
- **Health Advisory:** Provides important information about a public health incident.

- **Health Update:** Provides updated information about a public health incident.

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This message was distributed to state and local health officers, state and local epidemiologists, state and local laboratory directors, public information officers, HAN coordinators, and clinician organizations.

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SOURCES

CONTENT SOURCE:

[Office of Emergency Risk Communication \(OERC\)](#)