



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE  
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Commissioner

## 2026 Health Advisory #8:

### Andes Strain Hantavirus Outbreak Associated with Cruise Ship

*Please distribute to all emergency medicine, internal medicine, family medicine, pediatric medicine, infectious disease, and infection prevention and control staff in your facility.*

- A cluster of individuals on a cruise ship with severe respiratory disease due to the Andes strain of hantavirus was reported to the World Health Organization on May 2, 2026.
  - To date, 8 cases have been identified, including 3 deaths, among the 149 people aboard the cruise ship.
  - The outbreak is being managed by an ongoing international public health response.
- **There are no NYC residents known to have exposures to the cluster at this time, and the risk of hantavirus infection in NYC, including the Andes strain, remains extremely low.**
- While the risk is low, NYC healthcare providers should be aware of the outbreak and ask about potential links with the specific affected cruise ship for people with clinical illness compatible with hantavirus infection.
- Unless otherwise directed by the NYC Health Department, provide routine testing and care for all people, regardless of recent travel or exposure history.
- This health advisory summarizes the current outbreak as well as the epidemiology, clinical presentation, treatment, infection prevention and control, reporting, and testing of the Andes strain of hantavirus.

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May 8, 2026

Given the ongoing outbreak of the Andes strain of hantavirus among individuals on the MV Hondius cruise ship, New York City (NYC) healthcare providers should remain up to date on the situation and familiarize themselves with disease epidemiology, clinical presentation, treatment, infection prevention and control, reporting, and testing guidelines. Although there is extremely low risk to New Yorkers of infection related to this cluster at this time, clinicians should be vigilant for any possible infection in people who present with compatible symptoms and relevant exposure history.

#### Situational Update

- On May 2, 2026, the World Health Organization (WHO) was notified of a cluster of individuals on the MV Hondius cruise ship with severe respiratory illness, later found to be due to the Andes strain of hantavirus.
  - As of May 7, 2026, 8 cases have been identified, including 3 deaths, one critically ill person, and 3 individuals reporting mild symptoms.
  - No cases have been reported among United States residents.
  - Among the cases, illness onset occurred during April 6–30, 2026, and was characterized by fever, gastrointestinal symptoms, rapid progression to pneumonia, acute respiratory distress syndrome, and shock.
- The cruise ship was initially carrying 149 individuals, including 88 passengers and 61 crew members, representing more than 20 nationalities.
  - Although some passengers left the cruise ship prior to identification of the cluster, most

- passengers remain onboard at this time.
- Plans for passengers to disembark and repatriate are in process.
- WHO currently assesses the risk to the global population from this event as low.
- At this time, there are no NYC residents known to have exposures to the cluster; as a result, the risk of identifying a case in NYC is extremely low.

### **Epidemiology**

Hantaviruses naturally infect rodents and are occasionally transmitted to humans through contact with contaminated urine, droppings, or saliva of infected rodents. The Andes strain of hantavirus is rare and primarily found in parts of South America, especially Argentina and Chile.

The Andes strain has shown limited person-to-person transmission in prolonged and close-contact settings. Secondary infections among healthcare workers have previously been documented in healthcare facilities. No other hantavirus strains, including those circulating in North America, have demonstrated person-to-person transmission. People with the disease typically develop symptoms 4–42 days after exposure and are considered infectious only while symptomatic.

### **Clinical Presentation**

The Andes strain can cause hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS), a severe and potentially deadly disease that affects the lungs. Symptoms include fever, fatigue, muscle aches, headaches, cough, chest pain, and gastrointestinal symptoms. Symptoms can then progress to more severe respiratory illness.

### **Treatment**

There is no specific treatment for hantavirus infections. Supportive care early in the course of illness, possibly including intensive care unit admission with intubation, fluid replacement, vasopressors, or extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO), is critical to improving chances of recovery. HPS is fatal in nearly 4 in 10 people who are infected.

### **Infection Prevention and Control**

People with suspected or confirmed Andes strain hantavirus infections should be cared for in airborne infection isolation rooms using the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), including gown, gloves, eye protection, and N95 respirator or higher.

### **Reporting and Testing**

Immediately call the NYC Health Department at 866-692-3641 if a case of hantavirus is suspected and NYC Health Department staff will help guide you on diagnostic testing and additional management. Testing requires blood samples to be sent to a public health laboratory.

### **References**

- World Health Organization, Hantavirus Cluster: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/disease-outbreak-news/item/2026-DON599>
- NYC Health Department, Hantavirus Infection: <https://www.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/hantavirus-infection.page>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Andes Virus Isolation Precautions: <https://www.cdc.gov/infection-control/hcp/isolation-precautions/appendix-a-type-duration.html>