

Hantavirus Health Advisory

May 12, 2026

Situational Update

A cluster of passengers with severe respiratory illness aboard a cruise ship was reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) on May 2, 2026. Hantavirus, specifically the Andes virus that causes limited human-to-human transmission, has been identified as the cause of the outbreak. WHO reported a total of eight cases, including three deaths, as of May 8, 2026.¹

Three California residents were among the vessel's passengers, with one already disembarked and returned to California and two others repatriated to a medical facility in Nebraska for evaluation before returning home.² Sacramento County Public Health (SCPH) is monitoring a fourth individual who was not on the vessel but had close contact with a known case. This individual is currently asymptomatic and quarantining at home. SCPH will coordinate transportation to and care with UC Davis Medical Center, a designated Special Pathogen Treatment Center, should this be needed.

The risk to the general public is considered extremely low at this time.² However, clinicians should be aware of the potential for imported cases.

Guidance for Healthcare Infection Prevention and Control

1. **Isolate** patients with suspected or confirmed Andes virus infection in an airborne infection isolation room (AIIR).
2. **Don** appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), including gown, gloves, eye protection, and N95 respirator or higher.


Guidance for Specimen Testing

1. **Collect** the following specimens for testing:
 - **Serum:** 1 tube 10 mL whole clotted blood (red top)
 - **Whole blood** (if possible): 1 tube 5 mL tube in EDTA (purple top)
 - **Respiratory swabs** (nasopharyngeal swab or wash, tracheal aspirate, bronchoalveolar lavage, and/or pleural fluid) to rule out other respiratory viruses.
2. **Follow** standard precautions and bloodborne pathogen precautions when handling specimens from individuals with suspected hantavirus infection.
3. **Coordinate** testing with Sacramento County Public Health Laboratory by calling (916) 875-5881.

Resources:

1. Hantavirus cluster linked to cruise ship travel, Multi-country (WHO):
<https://www.who.int/emergencies/disease-outbreak-news/item/2026-DON600>
2. Health Advisory – Hantavirus Disease Outbreak Among Passengers of the MV Hondius Ship 5/9/26 (CDPH): <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/OPA/Pages/CAHAN/Hantavirus-Outbreak-Among-Passengers-on-Cruise-Ship.aspx>
3. Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome (HPS) Specimen Submittal Instructions:
https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/cls/idld/vrdl/CDPH%20Document%20Library/Hantavirus_Submittal_Instructions_Screening_Case_Report.pdf
4. Healthy Advisory – 2026 Multi-country Hantavirus Cluster Linked to Cruise Ship (CDC):
<https://www.cdc.gov/han/php/notices/han00528.html>

Sincerely,



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