



Public Health
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Ontario County, NY

Ontario County Public Health



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: May 14, 2026

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Locally-Acquired Hantavirus

Suspected case in Ontario County

Hopewell- Ontario County Public Health is investigating a suspected case of locally-acquired hantavirus. There is no connection to the current cruise ship outbreak. There is no risk to the general public.

In NY, human hantavirus infections are uncommon. There have only been a handful of cases since reporting became mandatory in 1995. Symptoms range from mild to severe. In the US, hantavirus is spread via mouse and rodent droppings - infected urine, feces and saliva can become aerosolized during cleaning, sweeping and vacuuming and humans can become exposed.

There are numerous types of hantaviruses. Those that have been found in the US cannot be spread from one person to another. Only one type of hantavirus, known as the Andes virus, has been known to spread in this way. The Andes virus is found in rodents in Argentina and Chile. This is the strain that is currently making national headlines.

This is a good opportunity to raise community awareness about using masks and other protective gear when cleaning attics, cabins and sheds this spring. Wearing gloves during these activities and washing hands and clothing afterwards are great prevention strategies.

Per Kate Ott, Public Health Director, "It is not the department's usual practice to provide a press release in this scenario, but with the current cruise ship outbreak, the influence of social media, and perceived public anxiety, I feel it is prudent to address the current investigation and reassure the community."

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