

CDC: Yosemite hantavirus outbreak has killed 3, sickened 10

November 22 2012, by Eryn Brown

To date, 10 people have fallen ill - and three have died - in the hantavirus outbreak at Yosemite National Park's "signature" cabins in Curry Village, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Hantavirus only infects a handful of people in the U.S. each year, but when it strikes it is deadly about a third of the time, killing by shutting down the respiratory system. Humans can catch the virus by getting bitten by infected deer mice, which carry the disease, or by inhaling [virus particles](#) that are shed in mouse feces or urine. Hantavirus cannot pass from person to person.

At Yosemite, [deer mice](#) infected with the Sin Nombre strain of hantavirus took up residence in the insulation in the signature cabins. Nine of the 10 human hantavirus cases occurred in guests who had stayed in the cabins, researchers from state public health agencies, the National Park Service and the CDC said in a brief article issued Wednesday in the CDC's [Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report](#).

The researchers also reported that the 10 patients came from California, Pennsylvania and West Virginia, and were between 12 and 56 years of age. Nine had typical symptoms of hantavirus pulmonary syndrome, such as fever, chills and aching. There is no treatment for hantavirus pulmonary syndrome, but receiving intubation, [supplemental oxygen](#) and other supportive care can boost survival.

The CDC urged physicians to keep hantavirus in mind as a possible diagnosis for patients "with a history of rodent exposure" who fall ill with fever and sudden respiratory problems. The Yosemite cabins have been closed since Aug. 28. The National Park Service is making changes to park facilities to help prevent future hantavirus outbreaks.

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