



COMMONWEALTH OF DOMINICA
MINISTRY OF HEALTH, WELLNESS AND SOCIAL SERVICES

ADMINISTRATION

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4th Floor, Government Headquarters
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Ministry of Health, Wellness and Social Services Issues Public
Guidance on Hantavirus Prevention**

Roseau, Dominica (April 28, 2026)- The Ministry of Health, Wellness and Social Services continues to monitor hantavirus and other rodent-borne diseases through ongoing national surveillance, epidemiological assessment, and collaboration with regional and international public health partners.

At present, there are no confirmed cases of hantavirus disease in Dominica. Local risk assessments conducted through the national surveillance system indicate that the current public health risk remains low. However, the Ministry is maintaining heightened vigilance, particularly following periods of heavy rainfall, flooding, and poor environmental sanitation, which may increase exposure to rodents and rodent-contaminated environments.

Hantavirus is a rare zoonotic disease associated with infected rodents and exposure to contaminated environments. Infection may occur through inhalation of particles contaminated with rodent urine, droppings, or saliva, especially when sweeping or cleaning enclosed rodent-infested spaces. Transmission may also occur through contact



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with contaminated surfaces, food, or beverages. Human-to-human transmission is extremely rare and has only been documented with a specific strain identified in South America.

Symptoms of hantavirus infection may develop between one and eight weeks after exposure and can initially resemble influenza or other respiratory illnesses. Common symptoms include fever, headache, muscle aches, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, cough, and shortness of breath. In severe cases, the illness may progress rapidly and require intensive medical care. Early medical attention is critical and can significantly improve outcomes.

The Ministry is therefore encouraging the public to take the following preventive measures:

- * Keep homes, surroundings, and communities clean and free of rodent harborage
- * Practice proper waste disposal and environmental sanitation
- * Store food securely and avoid exposure to contaminated food or water
- * Exercise caution when cleaning enclosed or rodent-infested areas
- * Avoid sweeping dry rodent droppings or nests; instead, disinfect affected areas before cleaning
- * Use gloves, masks, and other protective measures when handling potentially contaminated materials



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The Ministry of Health, Wellness and Social Services remains committed to safeguarding public health through surveillance, public education, and timely response measures. The public is encouraged to remain vigilant and seek medical attention promptly if symptoms develop following possible rodent exposure.

For additional information, persons may contact the Health Promotion Unit within the Ministry of Health, Wellness and Social Services at 266-3352 or 266-3469 or their nearest health centre.

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For more information, please contact:

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