

# HANTAVIRUS INFORMATION SHEET



DEER MICE  
*Peromyscus maniculatus*

The hantavirus associated with deer mice (Sin Nombre Virus) causes a severe disease in humans (Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome - HPS). HPS has been confirmed in all the southwestern states including California. Studies in Orange County have identified Sin Nombre Virus (SNV) in deer mice, other related rodent species, and woodrats.

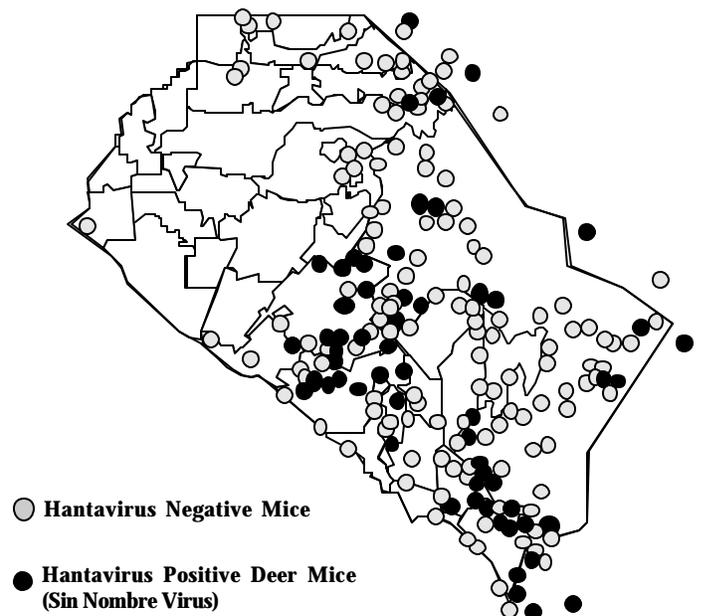
It has been determined that most of the HPS human cases have been linked to exposure to virus-infected deer mice and their excretions (droppings and dried urine). *Peromyscus maniculatus* is found throughout the State of California and has been collected frequently from numerous canyon, foothill, and residential/greenbelt localities in Orange County.

The deer mouse is four to six inches in length from head to tail, ranges in color from pale grey to yellowish brown, and has white fur on its belly, feet, and underside of the tail. The tail is shorter than the body. On average, 10-12% of deer mice in Orange County are infected, but can range from 3-40%. Infected deer mice have been found all year round, but the virus is most prevalent from November to April in Orange County.

The California Department of Health Services recommends that buildings with deer mice infestations be cleaned thoroughly where deer mice droppings have accumulated. As a precaution, the droppings should be misted from above with a mixture of one part household bleach to nine parts water and wet to the point of just being damp but not soaked. They should then be cleaned up, placed in a double plastic bag, and then disposed of. Dry droppings should not be swept or otherwise handled because of the possibility of aerosolized dust particles being inhaled; HEPA (N-100) dust masks, eye protection, and rubber gloves are recommended.

Deer mice should be controlled in cabins and other structures through exclusion, trapping, and use of approved rodenticides. House mice, rats, and their droppings should also be treated with the same precautions.

Distribution of Deer Mice and Sin Nombre Virus  
in Orange County, CA



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