



AN IMPORTANT
HEALTH ALERT FOR

RAT OWNERS or BREEDERS

Seoul virus is a hantavirus that is carried by rats, both domestic and wild, and can affect humans.

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY RAT IS INFECTED?

- There are no symptoms in rats, so your pet will not appear “sick.”
- Seoul virus is not known to be spread by animals other than rats.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS IN HUMANS?

- Initial symptoms can include fever, headaches, back and abdominal pain. Renal failure can occur. Death rates are thought to be 1–2%.
- Time between exposure and symptoms: 1–2 weeks is most common, but can be up to 8 weeks.
- If you are ill, seek medical attention and inform health care providers of your exposure to rats.
- There is no evidence of person-to-person transmission of Seoul virus.

HOW CAN I AVOID BEING INFECTED?

- The virus is transmitted by the rat through bites, saliva, urine, feces and contaminated bedding.
- It can also be transmitted through the air when stirring up bedding (DO NOT VACUUM).
- Reduce your chances of infection by wearing rubber, latex, or vinyl gloves and a mask when cleaning.
- Disinfect with a 10% bleach solution (using equal measurements, mix 1 part household bleach and 9 parts water) in areas with urine/fecal contamination.
- Owners are advised to wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water for at least 30 seconds.

WHAT IF I WANT TO HAVE MY RAT TESTED OR GIVE IT UP FOR ADOPTION?

- Contact a rescue or humane society ahead of time to make sure that the facility is adopting rats.
- Owners who want their rats tested or put down (euthanized) should contact their veterinarian.
- Do not release your rat into the wild!

See www.cdc.gov/hantavirus for more information



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