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<b>Event</b>	Global hantavirus outbreak – risk to New Zealand is low
<b>Notified by</b>	Clinical Team, Protection, NPHS
<b>Authorised by</b>	Dr Susan Jack, National Clinical Director, Protection, NPHS
<b>To</b>	Chief Medical Officers of Health, Hospital Specialists, NPHS national and regional services, Office of the Director of Public Health (Manatū Hauora).

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## **Global hantavirus outbreak – risk to New Zealand is low.**

### **Summary**

To alert healthcare professionals about an ongoing outbreak of hantavirus linked to the cruise ship MV Hondius. This is an evolving situation, for updates, please see *further information* below.

The risk to New Zealand is currently assessed as low.

As of 13 May 2026, Health NZ is not aware of anyone currently in New Zealand who has been exposed to hantavirus, or any exposed people overseas with booked travel to New Zealand within 42 days (the maximum incubation period) of disembarking MV Hondius.

An end-to-end health sector plan will be communicated to relevant teams and deployed if this changes.

No cases of hantavirus in humans or animals have ever been detected in New Zealand. New Zealand does not have the rodent species known to carry Hantavirus.

### **Background**

As of 12 May 2026, 11 cases and 3 deaths have been reported. Nine of the 11 cases are confirmed, and the other 2 are probable. The current WHO hypothesis is that at least one passenger was exposed while spending time in Argentina or Chile before boarding the ship and may subsequently have transmitted the virus to other passengers on board.

WHO has confirmed that this outbreak involves Andes virus, a strain of hantavirus that can spread between people. This is uncommon and generally requires close contact. Symptoms usually begin between 1 and 6 weeks after exposure to the virus (most commonly around 2 weeks). WHO has advised that any passengers on board MV Hondius are assessed as high-risk contacts.

Symptoms of hantavirus can include fever, headache, myalgia, respiratory symptoms (including cough, and shortness of breath) and gastrointestinal symptoms (abdominal pain, nausea or vomiting). In severe cases, illness may progress rapidly and can cause hantavirus cardiopulmonary syndrome (HCPS), and haemorrhagic fever with renal syndrome (HRFS).

### **Health New Zealand’s planned response**

As of 13 May 2026, Health NZ is not aware of any exposed people with booked travel to New Zealand within 42 days (the maximum incubation period) of disembarking MV Hondius and there are established international border communication processes should this change. However, NPHS is coordinating work to develop an end-to-end plan that will be implemented if a person exposed to hantavirus needs to return to New Zealand

during their quarantine period. This includes arrangements for safe transfer with appropriate infection and control prevention measures in place, as well as quarantine for up to 42 days in an appropriate location. Planning is also underway to ensure appropriate clinical assessment, testing, isolation, and management pathways are in place should the person develop symptoms.

NPHS is liaising with border agencies, the Ministry of Health and WHO member states to ensure a coordinated border plan and rapid sharing of surveillance information.

### **Key messages for healthcare professionals**

- Health NZ is not aware of anyone in New Zealand who has been exposed to hantavirus, or of any exposed people with booked travel to New Zealand. However, if this changes, an end-to-end health sector plan will be deployed and will be communicated to relevant teams in the receiving region.
- Any people exposed on the MV Hondius cruise ship who arrive in New Zealand would be immediately quarantined for up to 42 days, in line with WHO guidance.
- In the unlikely event that hantavirus is suspected:
  - notify your local Medical Officer of Health **urgently** by phone call for all regions.
  - discuss testing with your local clinical microbiology service. Hantavirus infection can be confirmed by PCR testing, with samples sent to Australia for processing. NZMN will also be sharing specific information regarding testing procedures with their network.See here for [contact details for local public health services](#).

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### **Further information**

Public facing information about hantavirus: [Health NZ Hantavirus](#)

Updated on the global hantavirus outbreak: [WHO Hantavirus updates](#) and [WHO Hantavirus outbreak toolbox](#)

Travel health advice: [SafeTravel](#), and [Keeping healthy when travelling](#).