

Hantavirus

contact tracing facts



1. What is hantavirus contact?

A “contact” is someone who may have been exposed to a person with Andes hantavirus during the time they were infectious, especially through close contact involving saliva, respiratory droplets, blood, or other body fluids.

People at higher risk may include:

- Household or intimate partners
- People who shared bedding, utensils, or personal items
- Healthcare workers caring for patients without proper protective equipment
- Individuals who had prolonged close contact in confined spaces
- Airline passengers seated very close to a symptomatic person during a flight

Most casual interactions are considered low risk. Public health teams assess each situation carefully and provide guidance where needed.

2. Understanding exposure risk for Andes hantavirus

Higher-risk exposure is generally linked to:

- Direct contact with body fluids
- Caring for someone who is ill without protection
- Extended close contact in enclosed space

Lower-risk exposure includes:

- Brief or casual interactions
- Contact while using appropriate protective equipment
- Being further away from a symptomatic person during travel

For most low-risk exposures, people are simply advised to monitor themselves for symptoms and seek medical advice if they become unwell.

3. Travel and hantavirus: what you should know

If a person was unwell with Andes hantavirus during a flight, public health authorities may follow up with passengers seated very close to them, especially within two seats in any direction.

The risk to other passengers is considered low, and transmission during air travel is rare.

Health authorities use a precautionary approach to identify and support anyone who may need monitoring or advice.

For more information

