

Hantavirus Claims Hooker OK Woman.

Summer is on its way and with it - a stronger chance of coming in contact with Hantavirus.

“Late spring and early summer are the prime seasons for hantavirus, which causes hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS),” according to the Centers for Disease Control. “The virus, carried by deer mice, is passed to people as they begin spring cleaning and outdoor activities like camping and hiking.”

A Hooker woman is the latest victim of Hantavirus.

“She had a four-day illness - a viral type syndrome with increasing respiratory distress,” said District 26 Coroner Dr. Hubert Peterson of Liberal. “She went to the doctor in Ulysses (Kansas) on the day she died.”

The woman, who authorities identified only as being 50-years-old, died March 19, while visiting her parents’ home in Ulysses.

“When she went to the doctor some tests done showed she had interstitial pneumonia so her doctor gave her antibiotics,” Peterson said. “The physician there wanted to admit her to the hospital, but she refused. She died about four hours later.”

Peterson, who did the autopsy on the victim, said she “looked normal on the outside” until he began to look closer.

“It was immediately apparent to me what she had once I started the autopsy,” he said. “She had fluid on each side of her lungs. Her lungs were congested and had some edema - a mottled purple red color. Everything else looked normal, however. She most likely would have lived another 30 to 40 years if she hadn’t gotten Hantavirus.”

According to Peterson, the quickness of what happened with the Hooker woman is not unusual.

“She was exposed to the virus, caught it and didn’t go to the doctor in time and she died of it,” he said. “That is what happens to most people.”

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