

HEALTH

ALERT

To: Infection Control – Crusader Community Health, Mercy Health Rockford Campus, St. Anthony's Medical Center, Physician Immediate Care, Rock River Valley Blood Center and SwedishAmerican Hospital; Emergency Preparedness Personnel; Emergency Department Directors; Infectious Disease Physicians, OB/GYN Physicians and Primary Care Physicians.

From: Todd M. Kisner, MPH - Director of the Center for Health Protection

Date: 20 January 2017

RE: **Seoul Virus**

The Health Department would like to bring to the attention of our Community Health Care Partners the existence of six cases of Seoul virus in individuals who had direct exposure to rats in two different Illinois ratteries as reported by the Illinois Department of Public Health. Ratteries are facilities where rats are bred. At this time, no cases of Seoul Virus have been identified in Winnebago County.

Seoul virus, a type of hantavirus, is carried only by brown or Norway rats. Hantaviruses are a large group of viruses, carried in rodents and insectivores worldwide, which can cause disease in people who become accidental hosts. Other pets and animals cannot be infected.

Seoul virus is transmitted to people from direct contact with rat urine or feces, contaminated materials like bedding, and possibly by aerosolized feces, urine, or saliva. It can also be transmitted through a bite from an infected rat.

Symptoms of Seoul virus in people typically develop within 1 to 2 weeks after exposure, but it can take up to 8 weeks for symptoms to develop. Symptoms include:

- Intense headache
- Blurred vision
- Back and abdominal pain
- Rash
- Fever

However, not all people infected with the virus experience symptoms.

Should a patient exhibiting the above symptoms have a history of exposure to or handling of a brown or Norway rat, please contact the Health Department at 815-720-4050.

Please share this information with your Health Care Providers, Emergency Department, Laboratory and Clinical Staff.

Should you have any questions, please contact the Health Department at 815-720-4050.