

After the Storm: Rat Lungworm



FOR RESIDENTS IMPACTED BY FLOODING

Neuroangiostrongyliasis, also known as rat lungworm disease, affects the brain and spinal cord. It is caused by a parasite found in rats, slugs, and snails. The disease is found on all islands in Hawai'i. Symptoms range from severe headaches to neurologic complications, such as stiff neck or limb weakness.

What to Know:



- Infected rats pass the parasite in their droppings.
- Slugs and snails become infected by consuming rat droppings.
- Increased rainfall brings more snails and slugs, posing a greater risk of exposure.
- People can get sick by eating unwashed raw produce that contains a small snail or slug, or part of one.

What to Do:



- Wash produce thoroughly under running water even if the produce is labeled "pre-washed," and check leafy greens for tiny slugs/snails.
- Practice good hand hygiene by washing hands with soap and water after handling raw produce or working in gardens.
- Eliminate food sources by securing trash cans, cleaning up fallen fruits, and removing other potential food sources that attract rats.
- Remove standing water by emptying containers, pots, plants or tarps after the storm.
- Control and eliminate pests by eliminating slugs, snails, and rats near homes and gardens using bait, traps, rodent-proofing, and good sanitation. Use tongs or chopsticks to put snails or slugs in a "slug jug" containing 6 parts water to 1 part salt.

 Early detection and treatment are crucial. See your doctor if you suspect you have contracted the disease.

Scan for DOH
Rat Lungworm
Disease website



PLEASE FOLLOW ALL INSTRUCTIONS FROM LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

Rat Lungworm | Updated March 26, 2026