

KNOW THE FACTS! RODENT CONTROL

You feed them, you breed them. Rodents, including mice and rats, can be a problem in both urban and suburban areas. Rodents need food, water and shelter to thrive. Floods, tornadoes, severe storms and construction can displace rodents and leave them searching for new homes and new food sources.

How to tell if rodents are present:

- Survey property for nesting and burrows. Rodents usually burrow under items directly associated with the ground, such as a shed, concrete slab or wood pile.
- Watch for rodent feces. Rodent droppings are usually round, pellet-like in shape with tapered ends. Fecal material can usually be found in confined places near burrows or at a food or water source.

When a rodent problem occurs in a neighborhood, residents and health officials must work together to eliminate rodents' access to food, water and shelter. Following the steps below will help eliminate a neighborhood rodent problem and will help prevent rodents from returning to the area.

Eliminate food and water sources:

- Do not leave garbage in plastic bags on the street or outside your home. Place all garbage in sealed trash cans that have no holes.
- Clean garbage cans with soap and water weekly.
- Do not litter on the street or in public places.
- Store all food, including pet food and bird seed, in sealed containers.
- Do not feed animals such as birds or squirrels. Suspended feeders or food thrown in a pond may leave a residual food source on the ground for rodents.
- Pet food and pet feces are food sources for rodents. Store pet food inside. Remove pet droppings from your yard daily.
- Fix leaks or dripping faucets that may create water sources for rodents.
- Compost piles are a food source for rodents. They may be baited, but if the pile is disturbed before baiting, rodents will find a new place to live on the property.
- Vegetable gardens may also be a source of food for rodents. Pick ripe vegetables.

Eliminate shelter:

Rodents live behind walls, under floors and in ceilings and can move through cracks bigger than 1/2 inch wide.

- Look for holes in floors and in out-of-the-way places like closets, gas and water pipes, and behind kitchen appliances.
- To plug a rat hole, place heavy gauge wire mesh (copper, stainless steel or aluminum) in the hole and then cover the hole with spackle or a sealant that hardens.
- To block the space between the door and the floor, attach a sheet metal "kick plate" to a door with screws to ensure the gap is less than a 1/4 inch wide.
- Clean up rotting wood piles, crumbling concrete and debris under wooden steps or decks.

Baiting information:

Use a powerful rodenticide (bait). These can be purchased at hardware stores and supercenters.

- Place bait in burrow for at least five to seven days. Check daily and add new bait when the first block is nearly gone.
- To determine if your efforts were successful, shovel dirt at the opening of the burrow(s). Do not pack down. Check in 24 hours to see if the dirt has been disturbed. If not, leave dirt in place, baiting was successful. If dirt is pushed out, repeat baiting process for several additional days and try again.
- Remember, baiting alone is not an effective elimination method. When a rodent problem occurs, residents must work together to eliminate sources of food, water and shelter.

Following the above guidelines can help eliminate home or neighborhood rodent problems. For more information please contact the Division of Environmental Health at 513.946.7847.



PREVENT. PROMOTE. PROTECT.

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