

What to Do About Rats or Mice

Rodents can be a nuisance when they enter your home or business but they can also spread different diseases. Diseases carried by rodents can also be spread to humans indirectly, through ticks, mites or fleas that have fed on an infected rodent. They can also spread disease direct contact with urine, feces, saliva, or bites.

How to Prevent and Control a Rodent Infestation

Seal up holes inside and outside the home to prevent entry by rodents

Mice can squeeze through a hole the size of a nickel, and rats can squeeze through a hole the size of a half dollar! Prevent rodents from entering the home by checking inside and outside the house for gaps or holes. Fill small holes with steel wool. Put caulk around the steel wool to keep it in place. Use lath screen or lath metal, cement, hardware cloth, or metal sheeting to fix large holes. These materials can be found at your local hardware store. Fix gaps in trailer skirtings and use flashing around the base of the house. If you do not remember to seal up entry holes in your home, rodents will continue to get inside. Outbuildings and garages should also be sealed to prevent the entrance of rodents.

Where to look for gaps or holes inside your home?

- Inside, under, and behind kitchen cabinets, refrigerators and stoves.
- Inside closets near the floor corners.
- Around the fireplace.
- Around doors.
- Around the pipes under sinks and washing machines.
- Around the pipes going to hot water heaters and furnaces.
- Around floor vents and dryer vents.
- Inside the attic.

Where to look for gaps or holes outside your home?

- In the roof among the rafters, gables, and eaves.
- Around windows.
- Around doors.
- Around the foundation
- Attic vents and crawl space vents.
- Under doors.
- Around holes for electrical, plumbing, cable, and gas lines.



Trap rodents around the home to help reduce the rodent population

Choose an appropriate snap trap. Traps for catching mice are different from those for catching rats. Carefully read the instructions before setting the trap. When setting the trap, place a small amount of peanut butter

(approximately the size of a pea) on the bait pan of the snap trap. Position the bait end of the trap next to the wall so it forms a "T" with the wall. Rodents prefer to run next to walls or other objects for safety and do not like being out in the open. In attics, basements, and crawlspaces and other areas that do not have regular human traffic, set traps in any area where there is evidence of frequent rodent activity. Some rodents, particularly rats, are very cautious and several days may pass before they approach the traps. Other rodents, such as house mice and deer mice, are less cautious and may be trapped more quickly.

Clean up rodent food sources and nesting sites

Keep food in thick plastic or metal containers with tight lids.

Prevent contact with rodents by cleaning up your home, workplace, or campsite.

Eliminate possible rodent food sources

- Keep food in thick plastic or metal containers with tight lids.
- Clean up spilled food right away and wash dishes and cooking utensils soon after use.
- Keep outside cooking areas and grills clean.
- Always put pet food away after use and do not leave pet-food or water bowls out overnight.
- Keep bird feeders away from the house and utilize squirrel guards to limit access to the feeder by squirrels and other rodents.
- Use a thick plastic or metal garbage can with a tight lid.
- Keep compost bins as far away from the house as possible (100 feet or more is best).
- Keep grains and animal feed in thick plastic or metal containers with tight lids. In the evening, uneaten animal feed should be returned to containers with lids.

If storing trash and food waste inside the home, do so in rodent-proof containers, and frequently clean the containers with soap and water. Dispose of trash and garbage on a frequent and regular basis, and pick up or eliminate clutter.

Eliminate possible nesting sites outside the home. Elevate hay, woodpiles, and garbage cans at least 1 foot off the ground. Move woodpiles far away from the house (100 feet or more is best). Get rid of old trucks, cars, and old tires that mice and rats could use as homes. Keep grass cut short and shrubbery within 100 feet of the home well-trimmed.