

RODENTS, ROACHES, *and* MORE!

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TIPS TO ENSURE THAT YOUR MOTHER-IN-LAW IS THE ONLY UNWANTED GUEST IN YOUR HOME THIS WINTER.

Household pests can become a huge problem if they aren't managed early, which is why preventing an infestation is the key to keeping your home safe from rats, mice, cockroaches, and bedbugs. We all know that rodents or bugs in the house are gross, but how many of us actually know why? Rats and mice are huge disease carriers via their saliva, spit, and feces. Their feet can contaminate the surfaces of your home even without urinating or defecating on them. In addition, these pests can spread disease through touching or nibbling on food, particularly grains and fruits. One study found that in Asia alone, the amount of grain eaten by rodents was enough to feed 200 million people for one year. Their disease carrying capabilities are one of the biggest reasons why it's so important to protect your home from an infestation using some of these preventative measures:



TIP #1

KNOW WHAT PESTS ARE IN YOUR AREA

You can't protect yourself from pests if you don't know what kind of animals and bugs reside in your area. It would be silly to take measures to protect your home from dormice if they are uncommon where you live. If you arm yourself against the pests that live in your region, then you will be more likely to successfully prevent an infestation. Similarly, if you try to prevent every kind of pest in existence, you will likely waste both money and time with specific poisons, traps, or other ways of deterring them from coming in your house. For example, the most common rodents in the New England area are mice, Norway rats, and roof rats, so residents of New England can take specific measures to protect themselves from these specific rodents.

The good news is many prevention tips are the same for various different rodent and bug species. This list primarily includes "rule of thumb" suggestions that will generally keep you and your home safe from rodents. Following these rule of thumb guidelines will likely keep you safe from pests.

TIP #2

START BEFORE YOU SEE ANY SIGNS OF PESTS

The key to preventing rodents is starting early. If you wait until you have seen droppings, heard scratching, or even seen an animal, you are no longer in prevention mode; instead, it has turned into extermination mode. Prevention has to happen before you spot any evidence of a rodent problem, because waiting can cause a full blown infestation in what feels like no time. Rodents reproduce at an impossibly fast rate, some breeds having as many as eighty-four young, per female, per year! Norway rats, mice, and roof rats all have a gestation period of 19-22 days, so within a three week period, your rodent problem can get even bigger.

A great time to start preventative measures is in the fall, as winter time is generally when rodents head indoors. Rodents don't hibernate during the winter, so they actively seek somewhere warm and dry to make their homes during the colder months. Once indoors, they build nests and begin reproducing, constantly growing the population.



TIP #3

SEAL ALL POINTS OF ENTRY TO YOUR HOME

Rodents are astonishingly resourceful creatures. Most of the common household pests are excellent climbers and decent swimmers. The rodents' strong front teeth allow them to chew through many substances and create space for themselves or get to food they can smell. These teeth are also sharp and can cause harm to people and animals that get bitten. Mice and rats can get through holes that appear to be much too small for their bodies; mice have been known to get through spaces as small as a nickel, which is why it's so important to seal all the holes in and around your house to keep them from getting in.

The following are some tips for keeping rodents out of your house:

- Store food, especially grains and cereals, in airtight containers
- Keep firewood at least twenty feet away from the house
- Trim shrubbery and trees to be away from the house
- Always have functioning screens on windows, especially in basements
- Place a screen on the chimney
- Place door sweeps on all doors leading to the outdoors
- Keep attic and garage spaces clean and dry
- Seal all cracks and holes on the outside of the home with caulk or steel wool. The seal needs to be flush with the surface of the house so that the animals can't get a grip to chew through or pull out the barrier



In addition to all these measures, generally keeping your home and yard clean, tidy, and sanitary will go a long way in preventing rodents from moving in. If they don't have a place to hide, eat, and live then they won't stay in your home. Keeping a clean home has the additional benefit of making traps, baits, and poisons more attractive to the rodents that do show up.

TIP #4 GET A CAT

Cats are natural born predators and are known to kill rodents and bugs in a wide radius of their homes. There's a reason that most barns and farmhouses keep cats. Selecting a cat from your local shelter will save a life and get you a loving companion, pet, and hunter. When you are selecting a cat for hunting, there are a few qualities to look for.

A cat that likes to play and has a long attention span will usually be a better hunter than one that quickly loses interest. Test a cat's playfulness with toys to see how much or how little the cat wants to play. While the cat's personality is a better indicator of how well it will hunt rodents than its breed, there are some breeds that tend to be more laid back. Persian, Siamese, and Maine Coone are among these "lazy" breeds that don't mouse hunt very well. A well-fed,

pet cat will hunt for pleasure, so if you do choose to get a cat, it's important to take good care of it. Getting a cat just for pest control purposes will be obvious to the cat who might find a home and food elsewhere. In addition, hunting cats need regular vaccinations to prevent diseases, and they must be spayed or neutered in order to prevent an overpopulation of cats in your area.



TIP #5 BUT WHAT ABOUT ROACHES AND BEDBUGS?

Preventing cockroaches and bedbugs is harder because they are much smaller pests. Cockroaches like to live in many of the same kinds of places that rodents do, so many of the tips listed above will help keep them out. Sealing or placing screens over drain lines can help keep them out of your pipes. Roaches like crumbs and trash, so make sure to keep your garbage can lidded and clean, emptying it frequently. Anywhere dank and moist is a happy home for cockroaches, so promptly fixing leaking sinks or pipes can keep them from being attracted to your home. Essentially, anywhere that food crumbs and residue or water might accumulate should be cleaned and checked regularly.

As for bed bugs, prevention is of the utmost importance because they are widely considered the most difficult bug to eliminate

when an infestation occurs. These pesky bugs are resilient and clever hidiers, so constant vigilance is key. Keeping a clean home is necessary to keep them away, but that's not always enough. Frequently inspecting all areas of your home for the signs of bedbugs is the best way to be sure to keep them away.

Examine your mattress, seams of couches and chairs, and other furniture cracks and corners for brown or reddish spots, as well as the places around and under where pets sleep. Bedbugs can travel around on your clothes, so always clean and vacuum your office and inspect hotel room beds and furniture for the signs as well. As an extra precaution, you can take a large plastic garbage bag with you when you travel to keep these pests from getting inside your suitcase and riding back home with you.



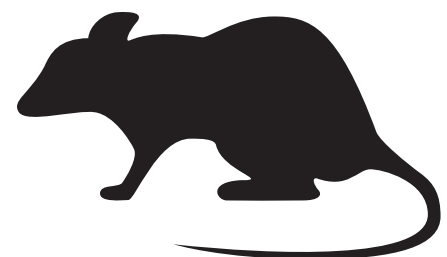
TIP #6 HOW TO SPOT THE SIGNS OF AN INFESTATION

There are several telltale signs when you have rodents in your home. Often the first sign is strange sounds coming through the walls; sometimes your pets can hear them before you, so take notice if your dog or cat takes sudden interest in one part of a wall. Obviously, seeing a rat or mouse in your yard or inside your house will indicate that there are more nearby because these animals typically live in groups. You can also watch for droppings, torn food containers, or other signs of chewing in or around the house that might be points of entry. Rodents also create nests, so watch for gatherings of shredded paper, clippings, and other materials.



TIP #7 WHAT TO DO IF THERE IS AN INFESTATION

Sometimes, no matter how many steps you have taken to prevent an infestation, pests find their way into your home. Often if your neighbors are not as vigilant as you, pests can spread from one house to another. If you happen to find yourself with an infestation of rodents or bugs, the best thing to do is call a professional exterminator to assist you in getting rid of the problem. Many pests, especially bed bugs and rats, require professional training to eradicate completely.



Household pests can be an annoying, expensive, and dangerous problem. They cause damage to your home, your health, and your peace of mind, which is why it's so important to take measures to prevent them from ever taking hold in the first place. So often, people don't think to do anything about pests until it's too late and an infestation has already occurred. By following the guidelines in this eBook, you can help protect your home and family from the hassle and danger of rodents, roaches, and bedbugs.

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