

RAT AND RODENT INFESTATION



Rodents like rats and mice can ruin food and damage property. Rats and mice have similar features with mice generally having larger ears, light brown to dark grey fur with a lighter colour on their belly and can often be found in urban areas. Rats are larger than mice but prefer living in damp areas like crawl spaces or building perimeters.

Both rats and mice can:

- Carry and transmit disease
- Carry fleas or ticks which can harm pets and humans
- Contaminate food with their hair, droppings and urine resulting in food poisoning
- Cause fires by gnawing on electrical wires or damage to buildings by chewing on insulation, siding and drywall

Rats may be living nearby in fields and parks, along creek banks and other water ways, on farms, or in a neighbour's cluttered backyard or basement. Rats are active at night and may be unnoticed during the day.

When rats are seen regularly on properties or in yards, they are commonly there because there is some type of food source. Most of the time, there is simply untidy waste areas within about a 50 – 75 m radius of where the rats are found.

Rats and mice are not known to have caused human rabies in North America. For more information on rabies or if you want to report a rodent bite contact Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653.

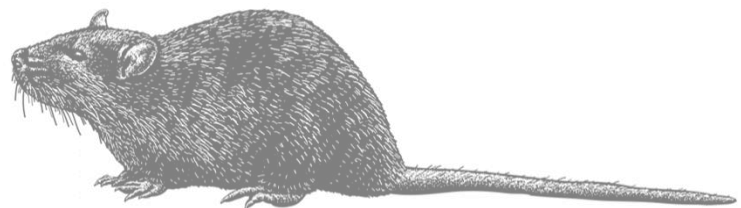
RODENT PREVENTION AND CONTROL

The most effective and economical long-term solution to get rid of a rodent problem (and prevent it from happening again) is to use an **Integrated Pest Management (IPM)** program. There are also steps you can take to help prevent rodent problems:

Signs of a Rodent Infestation

Rats and mice are most active at night, so it can be hard to spot them. But there are signs to watch out for including:

- Seeing live or dead rodents
- Damage to goods and structures
- Droppings and urine stains
- Burrows, holes or nests
- Runs and tracks
- Chewed food packages
- Noises, especially at night



PUBLIC HEALTH

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Dispose it

- Avoid touching dead rodents, droppings, or urine with your bare hands. Wear waterproof rubber gloves and a dust mask or use a shovel
 - Clean and disinfect waterproof rubber gloves according to manufacturer/product instructions before reusing
- Never sweep or vacuum dry droppings. The dust that is raised can cause illness. Dampen droppings and debris with a solution of bleach and water before wiping up
- Put into a doubled garbage bag
- Wash your hands with soap and warm water after handling
- Wash exposed clothing thoroughly after clean-up and separate from other laundry
- Follow local municipality waste disposal guidelines

Clean it

- Keep gardens clean and tidy. Cut tall grass and weeds back from your house and in your garden
- Do not plant flowers and shrubs close to your house and ensure there is about eight inches of space under plants
- Remove any discovered nesting sites in unused clutter around your house, garage and sheds
 - Important: when cleaning up rodent nests and droppings, wear protective equipment such as gloves and a mask to prevent possible infection
- Remove unused piles of lumber, old tires and old structures from your property
- Do not store old furniture and cars outside
- Store firewood, lumber and garbage cans off the ground
- Keep all garbage in rodent-proof containers, metal or plastic, with tight-fitting lids
- Properly maintain compost and keep it away from the house. Consider a metal mesh between the soil and composter. Avoid putting oily or fatty food waste, eggs, or milk products in the composter
- Remove fallen fruits and nuts in your garden
- Provide bird feeders with trays and clean spilled seeds often
- If you have a bird bath, keep it clean
- Do not leave pet food outside overnight
- Keep your kitchen clean. Store dry food and dry pet food in metal or glass containers

Seal it

- Keep doors closed
- Cover ground floor and basement windows and all vents with metal screening or steel mesh
- Repair cracks in cement footings and foundations; seal any openings larger than ¼ inch. A rodent can squeeze through a hole the size of a nickel!
- Build sheds on concrete slabs
- Inspect your house to ensure there are no holes around central heating pipes and plumbing pipes
- Equip floor drains and sewer pipes with tight-fitting grates that have openings less than ¼ inch in diameter
- Correct leaky taps and pipes and faulty drains. Eliminate other sources of water available to rodents
- Stuff steel wool around pipes before caulking and plastering

Trap it

- Several types of traps are available on the market. Carefully read the instructions before purchasing and setting traps
- Do not place traps near children, food preparation areas and pets
- Check traps daily to remove dead rodents
- If the infestation is out of control, call a pest control company
- If applying pesticides without the assistance of a pest control company, use the product safely and follow the label and manufacturer's instructions. Visit [Health Canada's Use Pesticides Safely](#) site for more information
- If trapping does not get rid of the rodents, try baiting stations (small trays with rat poison). Allow three to four days for rodents to become comfortable with baits. Use strong-smelling sticky foods like peanut butter, bacon grease mixed with oats or raisins to attract them

For more information, contact Access York 1-877-464-9675; TTY: 1-866-512-6228 (for deaf and hard of hearing).