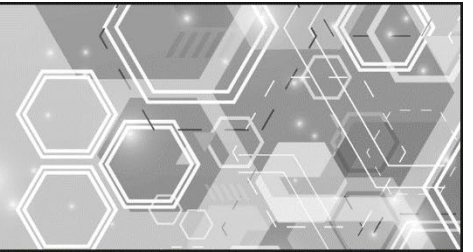




Durham Region Health Department Facts about...



Rodent Control

What is it?

Rodent control means eliminating rodents or reducing the number of rodents in or around your space/home. Rodents such as the Norway rat (also known as brown, common, and sewer rat), the roof rat and the house mouse need to have their population controlled as they can breed quickly.

What is the problem?

Rodents can be carriers of diseases which can be spread to humans such as salmonella and hantavirus. They eat almost anything and can damage buildings by gnawing through rubber, aluminum, soft metals including light steel, cinder blocks, plastic and wood. They leave lots of droppings and can contaminate large amounts of food. They fit through small spaces (mice need only a 6-millimeter space and rats a 12-millimeter space to get through an opening).

How do I know if I have a problem?

You can identify a rodent problem by:

- **Droppings** - black, rice-size droppings suggest the presence of mice; and black, bean-size droppings suggest the presence of rats
- **Burrows** – fresh digging around foundations and into walls (rats)
- **Runs** – dust-free “pathways” along otherwise dusty walls and floors (rats or mice)
- **Gnawing Marks** – on wood, concrete or other materials if entries or food/water are nearby
- **Sightings** – mice in daytime are common; rats in daytime indicate over-crowding
- **Smudge Marks** – greasy film left by fur along walls, often associated with “runs”

How can I protect myself?

You can protect yourself by treating all rodents as though they are spreading disease. Handle dead rodents, their urine and droppings with gloves and dispose of them with household garbage in tightly sealed bags (use special care when handling mouse droppings and urine – use a wet method of cleaning to avoid aerosolizing the waste, such as wet wiping or mopping with a household disinfectant). Discard any food that could be contaminated by contact with rodents or their droppings. Wash and sanitize your hands after handling traps, poisons, rodents and wearing gloves. Contact a licensed pest control operator for heavy infestations.

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How do I control rodents?

There are many things you can do to control rats and mice.

1. **Good sanitation** is most important. Keeping areas clear of food and debris.
2. **Eliminate Harborage** – Stored items should be kept 30 centimeters off the floor such as lumber and firewood for easy inspection. Clearing brush and trash from around homes and buildings reduces hiding places for rodents. Minimize clutter in, around, and out of the home and cut tall grass and weeds.
3. **Remove Food and Water Sources** – Maintain composters and secure garbage in rodent proof containers. Pick up after your fruit trees and pets. Eliminate water sources. Remove bird feeders and birdbaths during an active infestation. Food should be stored in rodent-proof storage containers in the home during an infestation to avoid contamination.
4. **Rodent Proof Buildings** – Seal outside openings where rodents can enter your home with the use of coarse steel wool and sheet metal around pipes, vents and electrical conduits. Pay close attention to door jams and gaps in siding. Repair cracks in cement footings and foundations. Build sheds on concrete pads.
5. **Control Existing Population** – Traps and rodenticides may be used to reduce or eliminate existing populations.
 - **Traps** involve the physical trapping of rodents. Always place enough traps: 1-2 meters apart for mice, and 7-10 meters for rats. Make sure you use the correct trap (rat traps for rats, mouse traps for mice). Concentrate on areas of high rodent activity that are **inaccessible** to children and pets.
 - **Rodenticides** are chemicals which are used to kill rodents. Concentrate on areas of high rodent activity that are **inaccessible** to children and pets. **Rodenticides are poisonous to humans and other animals. Always read and follow the manufacturer's directions and precautions.**
 - **Ultrasonic devices** give off sound waves or vibrations that rats and mice dislike. Rats and mice may, adapt to the devices and return. Ultrasonic devices can be used along with other pest control actions.

Property Maintenance

Rodents tend to establish themselves in areas that provide the essentials for their survival, including food, water, shelter, and safe passageways. To help prevent attracting rodents, it's important to work with your neighbours to remove any conditions that attract them or support their survival.

Your local municipality plays an important role in addressing private property offences and ensuring that residents properly maintain their properties. For further information, please contact your local municipality by-law (property standards).

Additional resources

Health Canada: www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/pest-control-tips/rats-mice.html

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov/rodents/

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