

House Mice

Information & Treatment Advice

Mice:

The House Mouse (*Mus domesticus*) has brown fur on its back and is grey underneath, reaches 5-8cm in length and weighs about 15 grams. They have a long tail and slender body. Its large ears, pointed nose and thin tail distinguish it from a young rat. The life expectancy of a mouse is around 1 year. Litter sizes vary from 6-7 babies and they can produce around 10 litters a year.

Mice are common pests of buildings, and when conditions are favourable their numbers increase quickly. House mice will come indoors all year round. They are cheeky characters and will explore everywhere for food and a place to set up home and start a family.

Problems:

Mice are able to squeeze through 6mm holes and every effort must be made to block up all places where they can get into a building. In houses they enter gaps left where pipes and cables pass through walls, broken airbricks and gaps under doors. They live in lofts, wall cavities and under floorboards where they will run, form nests and breed.

Like rats, mice are a hazard to human health. Their droppings and urine carry germs which cause diarrhoea and vomiting. Mice will also cause structural damage by gnawing on wood, electric cables, pipes and household items.

Left unattended, mice will breed rapidly and spread all over your house and possible from your house to neighbouring properties.

Signs of Mice

- Actual Sightings – dead or alive
- Droppings – groups of small spindle shaped droppings, mice produce up to 80 droppings a day and these resemble small back grains of rice, and are often the first sign of an infestation
- Damage – mice will gnaw food packaging
- Smell – there is usually a distinctive odour in areas where mice live in large numbers
- Nests – collections of gnawed materials built into a ball
- Noises – in voids such as wall cavities, in lofts or beneath the floor
- Smears – black greasy marks may be left by mice running over prominent objects over a long period of time
- Footprints - in dust or flour

Control:

Structural

You can exclude mice from your home by repairing external structural faults such as:

- Gaps beneath external doors – draught excluding brush or bristle strips can be attached
- Air vents – damaged or old style vents with holes over 0.6cm should be replaced or covered with fine mesh (DO NOT BLOCK AIR VENTS)
- Any holes, especially surrounding pipes – these can be blocked with wire wool or mesh and then filled with cement or expanding foam
- Climbing plants or foliage - cut away foliage from roof eaves, to prevent mice climbing up to your loft or other voids in the property.

Environment

You can make your home environment less attractive to mice by limiting

- Possible food sources such as household refuse, move household refuse outside regularly
- Food storage – place all stored food off the ground and keep opened packages in sealed containers.
- Overgrown gardens – mice can soon make a home in untidy gardens especially if there is a local food source.

Treatment

The old fashioned snap trap can be effective. The most common mistake is to use too few of them. In small rooms, set traps every 2 metres or even nearer together. Traps can be baited with peanut butter or chocolate spread and are more likely to catch mice if they are positioned baited end against walls or near cover rather than out in the open.

There are several poison mouse baits available to the householder from DIY stores and garden centres, which if correctly applied will generally give good control.

After finding mice in your house, take steps to stop mice entering your home again.

If you suspect that you have mice, it is best to treat them with experienced use of Rodenticide via a qualified pest control professional.