

# Mice



**The House Mouse has made itself very much at home and is now common throughout rural and urban Britain. Although mainly a house dweller, it may live outdoors for all or part of the year.**

## Description

The adult mouse is between 7 and 9cm in length and its tail is about 80% of its body length. It usually has brown fur with grey underneath.

Each female can have up to 10 litters in a year with 5 to 6 young per litter. Given ideal conditions, nearly 2000 offspring in one year could result from just 1 pair of adults. Mice are fiercely territorial and have an average lifespan of around 12 months.

Mice can eat a variety of foods, ranging from cereals, vegetables, fruits, fish, insects and meat. Mice will drink when a water source is available, but they can get sufficient moisture from their food.

Mice have poor eyesight and cannot see colour, but are very good at detecting movement.

## Recognising Mice Infestations

Once the House Mouse has gained entry into a property, any evidence or activity may usually be found in the following areas: kitchen cupboards, under floors, airing cupboards and roof spaces. Evidence of a mouse infestation will generally be live sightings, scuffling or scratching noises, droppings, gnawed foods and packaging.

- Mice may be found indoors (in lofts, cavity walls and basements).
- Regular sightings of mice (more than once a day) indicates that an infestation is nearby.
- Droppings (see above) are approx 6mm long, and resemble black grains of rice. They are likely to be found among stored food products and food preparation areas, so checking kitchen cupboards regularly is important.
- Gnawed holes in the skirting boards and around pipes and gnawed food cartons and boxes.
- Scratching noises in the wall cavities and across the ceiling.
- House mice have a distinctive musky smell or odour, which is particularly noticeable when you first enter the house.
- They produce smears by continually rubbing their fur against surfaces.

## Significance

Mice are responsible for the spread of many diseases, such as Salmonella. Their incontinence enables them to contaminate large areas with their urine, fur and droppings in only a short time. They may also cause considerable damage to property by gnawing woodwork, electric cables, water pipes and many other household items.

## Control

An infestation of mice can be particularly difficult to control because of the rate at which they breed.

In order to prevent such an infestation occurring, exclusion should always be the primary method of control. All gaps greater than 5mm must be sealed using mortar, mesh or brush/bristle strips and any vegetation growing upwards and into the roof of a property should be cut back. If you can get your little finger through a gap then a mouse can squeeze through too!

Regular maintenance checks should always be carried out, both inside and outside the property throughout the year.

Rubbish should be stored in a bin with a tight fitting lid and food should not be left out for the birds.

## The Use of Traps

Trapping is an effective control method for mice for small infestations in houses and garages. Simple, inexpensive snap traps are effective and can be bought in most hardware, grocery shops and DIY stores.



Traps should be set behind objects, in dark corners, and in places where evidence of mouse activity has been identified e.g. under the sink, behind the kickboards in the kitchen, behind bins, behind the cooker and under the stairs. Traps should be set correctly with the treadle next to the wall. Traps can be baited with a variety of foods, peanut butter is very popular because it is easy to apply and very attractive to mice.

**Remember to place them in areas where children and/or pets will not come across them.**

If your property or area is prone to mouse infestations always keep a couple of traps set to catch the initial mouse invaders.

## **The use of rodenticides**

Only use commercially prepared rodenticides that are available at all good hardware and DIY stores. Placing the bait so that mice are most likely to come in contact with it is essential. Remember to read the instructions carefully. Place baits no more than 1m apart and ensure they are out of the reach of children and pets Concentrate baits in areas where mice or signs of mice have been seen.

Ideal bait placement areas are behind the cooker, under the sink, behind kitchen kickboards, in the bathroom airing cupboard, in the loft, under the floorboards, in the electric/gas cupboard and other inaccessible places

**CAUTION: TO PREVENT POTENTIAL FIRE RISK DO NOT PLACE BAIT WITHIN 1 METRE OF A GAS FIRE, AND ALWAYS ENSURE THAT THERE IS AN UNIMPEDED FLOW OF AIR TO THE BACK OF THE FIRE.**

Remember that all rodenticides are poisons, and place them where only mice can get to them. Check the baits regularly to see if mice are eating it and top up any eaten bait with fresh rodenticide.

Continue baiting until mice stop eating it and no further signs of mice are detected.

Once the mice have been controlled, remove all uneaten bait and dispose of it by following the instructions on the packet. Rodenticides which are not removed will degrade and may increase the possibility of resistance to rodenticides developing. It will also increase the chances of non-targets (children and pets) coming into contact with the poison.

## Disposal

Dispose of dead mice properly. The best way is to place the dead mouse in a sealed plastic bag and put it in your wheelie bin.

## Professional help

In addition to those listed on our website Commercial Pest Control Companies are listed in the Yellow Pages and Thompson's Local Directory.

## Contact us

Customer relations manager

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