

Mice are much smaller than rats, but they can still do a lot of damage. They destroy food, books, furniture and even appliances with their gnawing, urine and droppings. Worse, mice in the home have been linked to a number of human diseases, including asthma. Because of their small size, they can fit through crevices as small as 1/4 inch wide, making them hard to control.

## Is there a mouse in the house?

You might not see the mice, but you can probably hear them after dark, as mice are often more active at night. Don't be surprised if your pets paw at walls and cabinets where mice are hiding.

Watch for mouse droppings and nests in storage areas, such as garages and basements. Nests are usually made of materials like bits of cloth or shredded paper. Or you can check for mouse tracks by dusting suspected areas with a light coating of unscented talcum powder or mason's chalk dust. Wait a day and then shine a flashlight across the area. If you notice small tracks in the powder, then you'll know that mice have been there.

## How do you control mice?

To get rid of mice in your home, follow the three basic steps below:

**1. Proper Sanitation** - A clean uncluttered home will make it hard for mice to find hiding places and food. Actually, mice can live on crumbs! Keep food and garbage in mouse-proof containers (metal or heavy-duty plastic with tight fitting lids), or in mouse-proof cabinets (including the refrigerator). Eliminate all sources of water such as condensation or leaks from faucets, pipes, radiators or any other sources.



**2. Mouse-Proofing** - Don't let mice get in! Seal all openings - like cracks and spaces around vents, wires and pipes - with sheet metal, concrete or a product like "Stuf-fit" which is a knitted copper wire mesh. Screen necessary openings, like fans and chimneys with 1/4" wire mesh. Doors and windows should be screened with tight-fitting metal screens. Keep a tight-fitting door sweep on all exterior doors. Seal or cover **all** openings, since mice can jump 12" high, run up the sides of buildings and cross cables and wires.

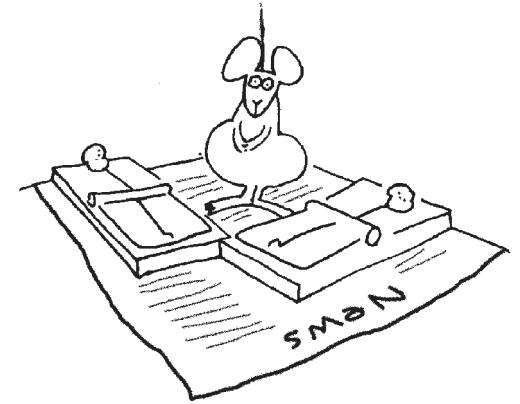
**3. Removing Mice** - Get rid of the mice you already have! Trapping is effective, and generally safer than using poison. Also, poisoned mice often die in hard-to-reach places causing a very unpleasant odor. When cleaning up any dead rodents or their droppings, be sure to:

- Wear rubber gloves
- Make a disinfectant by mixing detergent plus 1 1/2 cups of bleach for each gallon of water.
- Using a spray bottle of disinfectant, thoroughly spray dead rodents, traps, droppings and the areas where you found them.
- Do not sweep or vacuum mouse droppings in your home until you have wet the affected area with detergent, bleach and water. Dry sweeping or vacuuming might put dust containing viruses into the air.
- Place the sprayed rodent and/or droppings in a plastic bag and seal it. Then place the bag into a second bag, seal and dispose of with the trash.

## Snap Traps

Wood-based snap traps are inexpensive and work well. The newer, easy to

set, plastic mouse traps work well, too. Put a sheet of newspaper under the trap and place them anywhere you think mice are living. **Be careful to keep traps out of the reach of children and pets!** Setting traps in pairs works best. Set traps at right angles to the wall, with the trigger end touching the wall. Put them about 6 to 10 feet apart, along the suspected routes the mice travel. Mice tend not to cross large open spaces.



Enlarge the traps by attaching a two-inch square of cardboard to each trigger, or you can buy the expanded trigger model of trap. Foods that attract mice — crunchy peanut butter, freshly-fried bacon, fruit, nutmeats, or gumdrops — can be fastened securely to the trigger of each trap with thread. When the mouse takes the bait, the trap will spring.

Check traps daily. If nothing happens in a couple of days, move the traps to a new location. Mice are not afraid of new things or bothered by the smell of humans or dead mice on traps.

If you have many mice, you might have to use a multi-catch mouse trap or a glue board. You can purchase these in most hardware stores. Again, check traps every day.

## Poisons

Poisoned baits that contain anticoagulants, such as Warfarin, Pival and Chlorophacinone, are the most effective, least toxic mouse poisons for home use. Supply **plenty** of fresh bait each day for at least 15 days on until mouse activity stops. If there are still signs



of mice after a month, skip a month and start baiting again. First, read all label instructions completely, and follow them carefully. **Watch out for children and pets!** Make sure the baits are clearly marked and place them in a secluded and secure area that is attractive to mice—such as in cabinets, behind appliances, under boards, boxes, pipes or cans—and where they are also protected from rain and snow. **Follow label directions when disposing of all poisons!**

### A final word about mouse control...

The best way to control mice is to keep them out in the first place. Check your home yearly to make sure it's still mouse-proof and keep your home and property uncluttered. Don't expect your cat or dog to keep mice away. You have to take the necessary steps to prevent mice from becoming a problem.

### For more information...

Contact your local health department. To find your local health department online, go to [health.ny.gov/environmentalcontacts](http://health.ny.gov/environmentalcontacts) and click on your county for more information.

**Bureau of Community Environmental Health and Food Protection**

email: [bcehfp@health.ny.gov](mailto:bcehfp@health.ny.gov)

Phone: 518-402-7600 or 1-800-458-1158



**Department  
of Health**

# Mouse Control

