



Mice

Why are mice a pest?

There are two species of mice which are commonly found close to humans, the house mouse and the field mouse. They frequently invade houses, garages and out buildings, seeking a warm, safe environment with a local food source. Mice eat and excrete on food, contaminating it for humans. They urinate on food surfaces, spreading organisms which can cause food poisoning, such as salmonella. They eat most types of food found in domestic kitchens, but prefer grains.



Mice have been known to cause fires by gnawing through electrical cables. Mice can breed very quickly, a female can produce over sixty young in one year. Each female offspring is then able to reproduce in just three to four months. They can squeeze through openings as small as 6mm.

Signs of mice

The following are signs that mice may be present:

- Sightings – dead or alive
- Droppings – mice produce up to 80 droppings a day and these resemble small black grains of rice, 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



How to prevent mice

There are many things you can do to avoid having a problem with mice, many of them are simple and things you can do in to day to day life.

Exclusion

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 to the door or the threshold can be renewed or raised
- Wall climbing plants – can hide potential access holes and provide a route into your house. They should be trimmed or removed and not allowed to reach from ground to roof level as mice are excellent climbers
- 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*)
- Holes surrounding pipes – these can be blocked with wire wool or mesh and then filled with cement or expanding foam

Environment

You can make your home environment less attractive to mice by using the following tips:

- Food spillages and household refuse – clear up food spillages immediately and move household refuse outside regularly
- Bulky waste – remove any collections of materials (i.e. refuse, old furniture/carpets) kept close to the house as mice may use these to live in
- Domestic refuse – avoid the build up of domestic refuse in and outside your property. Use suitable containers such as wheeled bins and ensure they are regularly emptied
- 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. Remove accumulated refuse, stockpiles of materials or plain old junk

Control measures

If you find that you have mice in your home contact Dacorum Pest Control on 01442 228543/ 228455, or email pestcontrol@dacorum.gov.uk