



*Sedgwick County...
working for you*

Rodent Control

I have rats at my house. How did they get here?

Rodents such as rats and mice are attracted to areas with available food, water and places to nest. Rodents can squeeze through a hole the size of a nickel (mice) and half-dollar (rats) to find food and places to live.

Why are rodents a problem?

Rats and mice are a nuisance and can spread disease. Rodents' nests are messy, and they chew on structures, causing damage. Rodents can spread disease to people when handled, through rodent bites and by contact with rodent feces, urine or spit. Rodents can spread diseases such as plague, hantavirus and salmonellosis.

Where do rodents live?

Most rats and mice live in nests or burrows. Burrows are holes in dirt or concrete and can be found under bushes and plants. Rat burrows often have an entrance and exit hole.

How do I know if I have a rodent infestation?

Look for nests or burrows outside or inside a house. Look for droppings close to garbage or in nesting areas. Look for holes and gnaw marks on wood and plastic garbage cans. For rats specifically, check walls and grass for signs of runways—places where rats run along the same path many times per day. Check for rats and mice after dark using a flashlight.

How do I prevent a rodent infestation?

Keep food for people and animals in containers with tight lids. Use a garbage can with a tight lid. Do not leave pet food or water out overnight. Get rid of clutter inside and outside your house. Clutter gives rats places to hide and nest.

How do I get rid of rodents?

1. **SEAL UP:** Seal up holes inside and outside the home to stop rodents from getting in.

- Look for gaps or holes inside or outside your home.
- To seal holes, use materials such as caulk, steel wool, metal sheeting, cement or hardware cloth.

2. **TRAP UP:** Trap rodents to control the problem.

- An animal trapping service may be able to assist.
- Place traps in homes and outbuildings where rodents live.
- In a home, use snap traps, not glue traps or live traps which could help spread disease if the rodent urinates. Use peanut butter for bait. Position the trap next to a wall.
- Trapping and sealing at the same time in a home prevents new rodents from entering.

3. **CLEAN UP:** Get rid of rodent food sources and nesting sites.

- Clean up spilled food and wash dishes soon after use.
- Dispose of trash quickly and eliminate clutter.
- Use thick plastic or metal garbage cans with tight lids.
- Don't leave pet food or water bowls out overnight.
- Move bird feeders, compost bins and woodpiles away from the house.
- Keep grass cut short and shrubbery well-trimmed.

Always wear gloves when working where rodents live.



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Rodent Control (continued)

How do I protect my health when cleaning?

- Do not stir up dust by sweeping or vacuuming.
- Wear gloves and use a spray disinfectant.
- Use a paper towel to wipe up urine and droppings that have been sprayed with a disinfectant.
- Mop floors, steam clean carpets and furniture, wash bedding.
- Wash hands thoroughly when finished cleaning.
- Open doors and windows of cabins, sheds and outbuildings for 30 minutes before cleaning.
- Structures that have been closed during the winter are a potential risk for hantavirus infection.

How do I safely dispose of a dead rodent or rodent's nest?

1. Wear rubber, latex, or vinyl gloves.
2. Spray the rodent or nest and surrounding area with disinfectant or a bleach and water mixture. Soak for five minutes before wiping up with a paper towel or rag.
3. Place in a plastic bag and seal tightly.
4. Place the full bag in a second plastic bag and seal tightly.
5. Place bag into a tightly covered trash can that is regularly emptied.
6. Remove gloves and wash hands thoroughly.

For More Information:

Contact the Sedgwick County
Division of Health Epidemiology Program
at 316-660-7300 or visit
the Sedgwick County website at
www.sedgwickcounty.org.

Information for this fact sheet from:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
<https://www.cdc.gov/rodents/index.html>

New York City Rat Information Portal
<http://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/data/health-tools/rats-information-portal.page>