

## The Common Rat

Colour	Brown to Black
Hearing	Excellent
Eyesight	Poor
Average Weight	300g (10 1/2 oz)
Length (inc tail)	13.8-17.7 inches
Life Span	9-18 months
Breeding	Up to 7 litters per year
Sexually Mature	2-3 months
Number of litters per year	7
Number of young per litter	16-14

## The House Mouse

Colour	Brownish Grey
Hearing	Good
Eyesight	Poor
Average Weight	15g (1/2 oz)
Length (inc tail)	6.5-10cm (4 inches)
Life Span	10 months - 2 years
Breeding	Throughout the year
Sexually Mature	6 weeks
Number of litters per year	5-10
Number of young per litter	4-8

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## PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE

The old adage that prevention is better than the cure certainly applies to rodent infestations. Adopting good hygiene practices and proofing your home will help prevent infestations occurring and may prove to be more cost effective than treatments after the event. So what can you do to help prevent an infestation in the first place?

### Mice

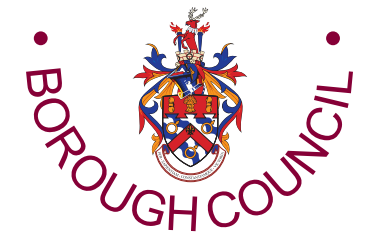
- Do not leave open food out overnight.
- Do not leave uneaten cat or dog food out overnight.
- Clean up spillages.
- Empty food bins regularly.
- Store food in rodent-proof (metal/glass containers).
- Keep outdoor areas free from food waste and refuse.
- Seal any gaps in outside walls, around doors and door frames. (mice can squeeze through a gap the size of a pencil).
- Regularly clean behind cookers, fridges etc, to prevent a build up of food debris.

### Rats

- Seal any gaps in outside walls, around doors and door frames.
- Keep the area immediately around your house free from debris or accumulations that rats can use for cover/nesting.
- Trim any tree branches overhanging your house-rats can use trees to gain access to your house.
- Keep exterior areas free from debris. Use specialist feeders or a raised bird tables to feed wild birds. Do not throw food on the ground.
- Store foodstuffs in a shed/garage in rodent proof containers.
- Where possible remove sources of water from outdoor areas, eg bird baths.

## Rats and Mice

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Rats and mice can transmit several diseases to man. They can also cause severe damage to properties by gnawing timbers and have been the cause of flooding damage and electrical fires due to gnawing of water pipes and electrical cables.

Diseases which may be transmitted to man from rats and mice include:

Salmonella

Listeria

Pasteurella

Leptospirosis (weils disease)

Cryptosporidia

Toxoplasmosis



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## How do you know if you have a mouse or rat problem?

### **Mice:**

More likely to be found indoors (loft, cavity walls and basement).

Droppings resemble black grains of rice about 6mm (1/4 inch) long. These droppings are often found amongst stored food products and in food preparation areas.

Holes gnawed in skirting boards, around pipes and in food containers.

Scratching noises in wall cavities and ceilings.

**SMELL** - House mice have a distinct musky smell which is very noticeable when you first enter a house.

### **Rats:**

Sightings of rats in your area.

Rats are more likely to be found outdoors or in buildings such as garages or sheds.

If rats do enter your house, they are more likely to be found in cavity walls, lofts, cellars and under suspended timber floors.

Droppings are 20mm (3/4") in length and resemble dark brown jelly beans.

Gnawing damage to containers, pipes and building structures.

Dirty smear marks around doors and holes where the rat's fur has rubbed against surfaces.

Burrows near outhouse, sheds or compost heaps.

Runs in undergrowth - small pathways of bare earth or flattened vegetation often leading to a burrow.

## Rat Control

The most effective way to control a rat infestation is by the use of modern anti-coagulant rodenticides. These require the animal to eat the bait over a period of several days; one meal will not be effective. It is, therefore, important that baits are checked on a regular basis.

To ensure success when baiting for rats you should:

Place the baits in areas where rat activity has been seen but shield baits from view since rats do not like to stray into the open for long.

Ensure that chickens, pets and wildlife cannot get access to the baits by placing them inside locked buildings or sheds, in purpose made baiting stations or inaccessible locations.

Check baits daily and keep them topped up until all signs of activity has ceased.

Ensure other sources of food are removed if possible (eg food for wild birds etc).

When the infestation has been treated, remove all baits and dispose of them in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.



**REMEMBER RODENTICIDES ARE  
POISONOUS YOU MUST MAKE SURE  
YOU PLACE THEM WHERE ONLY RATS  
AND MICE CAN GET TO THEM**

## Mouse Control

The most effective way to control a mouse infestation is by the combined use of traps, rodenticide and good hygiene/food storage practice.

### **Traps:**

Simple inexpensive mouse traps are effective and can be brought in most hardware/DIY stores.

Traps should be set behind objects in dark corners and in places where mouse activity has been identified, eg under the sink, behind waste bins, behind the cooker or under the stairs. Traps should be set with the treadle (swinging arm) next to the wall.

Traps can be baited with a variety of foods - peanut butter is popular with mice and it is easy to apply. Remember to ensure that children cannot get access to the traps.

### **Rodenticides:**

Only use commercially available rodenticides which are sold in hardware/DIY stores and garden centres.

Place baits no more than one metre (one yard) apart. Several small baiting points are better than one. Ensure that baits are out of reach of children, pets and wildlife.

### **Ideal places for bait include:**

- Behind the cooker
- Under the sink
- Behind kitchen unit plinths
- In the loft
- Under the floorboards
- In electric/gas meter cupboards

Check the baits regularly and top up if required. Keep baits in place until all evidence of infestation has ceased.

When the infestation has been treated, remove all baits and dispose of them in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.

Dispose of any dead mice by putting them in a sealed plastic bag and then in an outside bin.