

HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

Take Precautions Against Rodents—For Your Health

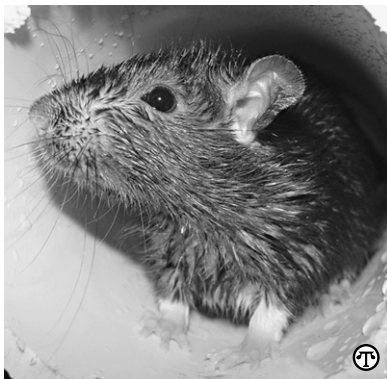
(NAPSA)—As the weather cools, homeowners may notice some unwelcome visitors seeking indoor shelter. Rodents, which invade homes while looking for food and warmth, can be difficult to keep out no matter what their size or species.

The most common rodent species in the United States are Norway and Roof rats and House and Deer mice. Surprising to many people, rats can squeeze through openings as small as a quarter, and mice can crawl through holes the size of a dime.

“Not only are rodents hard to control, these filthy pests can be dangerous, contaminating food and spreading diseases in your home,” says Frank Meek, board-certified entomologist and technical director for Orkin, Inc. “It’s important to contact a licensed pest control company for help in identifying and eliminating rodent problems.”

According to Orkin, Inc., mice alone contaminate 10 times the amount of food they actually consume. Rodents in general can carry fleas known to spread various types of plague and are also notorious for carrying and spreading diseases such as murine typhus and hantavirus pulmonary syndrome.

Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome, a potentially deadly disease transmitted by infected Deer mice through urine, droppings or saliva, was first recognized in 1993 and has since been found in 30 states, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Preven-



EEK! A rat can squeeze through an opening as small as a quarter.

tion (CDC). As of September 2004, a total of 379 cases of hantavirus have been reported in the United States, 38 percent of which have resulted in death.

Rodent control in and around the home is one way to prevent disease transmission. Meek says that although rodent control can be difficult, Orkin recommends the following tips:

- Securely store food in containers;
- Seal holes, gaps and cracks in your home or garage;
- Place traps in and around your home;
- Store firewood as far from the home as possible;
- Remove any piles of debris near the foundation of the home;
- Ensure that gutters are directing water away from the home.

For more information, visit www.orkin.com or call 1-800-800-ORKIN for a free inspection.