



# Pest Control

## Protect Yourself From Rodent Intruders

(NAPSA)—As the weather cools, you might not be the only one retreating inside. By year's end, the National Pest Management Association estimates rodents will invade 21 million U.S. homes, looking for food and warmth. Once inside, pests like rats and mice pose a serious threat to your home and health.

Rodents can infiltrate even the smallest chinks in a home's armor. According to Orkin, Inc., a rat can squeeze through a hole as small as a quarter, safely drop 50 feet or use its 36-inch vertical jump to enter your home. Similarly agile, mice can chew their way through walls, causing costly damage. Rats, too, can gnaw through lead sheathing, cinder block, aluminum sheeting, glass and electrical wires—a common cause of fire. Rats must gnaw constantly to trim their sharp teeth, which is why they are always looking for something to chew.

Rodents can survive in almost any environment. Some mice can live with little food or water and adapt to temperatures as low as 10 degrees below 0F. Living up to two years and reproducing nearly every 24 days, these vermin can quickly create an active community behind your walls.

Even more alarming is the potential for disease when rodents enter the home. Rats can spread the plague, typhus and food poisoning. Certain species of mice carry Hantavirus, a virus that can result in a fatal human respiratory disease. Rodent urine and fecal droppings not only can contaminate food but also foster the growth of tapeworm eggs.

"Rats and mice are among the most destructive of all pests," says Orkin entomologist Frank Meek.



**Rats and mice are a threat to your home and health in the winter.**

"Homeowners must reduce conditions that appeal to rodents to ensure their safety and protect their homes." To guard your home against these unwelcome guests, consider these tips:

- Inspect your home's exterior and interior regularly. Seal all cracks larger than 1/4-inch. Install weather strips at the bottom of exterior doors.
- Keep your home clean, especially the kitchen. Store all food, including pet food, properly. Do not leave dishes in the sink or pet food out overnight. Place garbage in lidded containers.
- Keep the yard clean. Place firewood, bricks and debris as far from the home as possible. Trim plants, bushes and limbs that hang over the home.
- Contact a licensed pest control company for help in identifying and eliminating rodent problems.

Remember: Controlling rodent populations in the fall and winter will reduce populations in the spring.

For more on rodent prevention, Orkin offers information and tips at [www.orkin.com](http://www.orkin.com). Call 1-800-800-ORKIN for a free home inspection.