

# 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 electric 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.

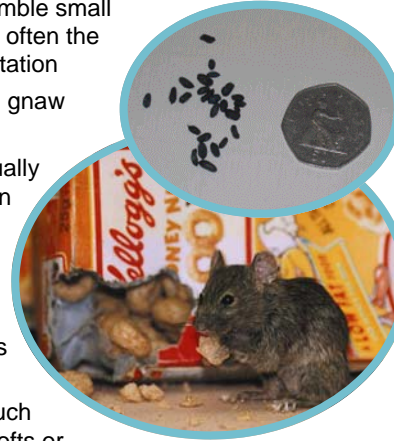
0.6cm



## 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

### Prevention is better than cure

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

Mice are highly adaptable creatures and this can sometimes make their control a difficult task.

### Traps

Traps that capture a live mouse and the more conventional break-back traps (which kill) are available from supermarkets and most garden centres.

These should be placed in cupboards, corners and next to walls where mice tend to travel. Traps can be baited with a variety of food but peanut butter, bacon fat, caramel and marzipan tend to work best. Use several traps and check them daily.

If you do not catch any mice or they are still a problem after catching several, the infestation may be more widespread than you first imagined. At this point you may need professional advice and help.

**Please note** – re-releasing caught mice locally may result in them coming back inside your property! Mice killed in break back traps can be buried or disposed of in the domestic refuse.

### Poisons (rodenticides)

Mouse poisons can be bought from supermarkets and most garden centres.

Poison baits should be laid in several locations (20gm to 30gm) in cupboards, floor and roof voids and other safe locations where mice frequent. These should be checked every 4 to 5 days and replenished accordingly until no further poison is taken and mice are no longer active.

If poison continues to be taken for more than 3 weeks or is not taken at all you may need professional advice and help and advice.

Leeds City Council offer a service for the treatment of mice, for more information please call us.

### **IMPORTANT**

When choosing to use traps or poisons ensure you handle with care and always refer to the product label instruction BEFORE USE and follow these at all times.

Make sure traps and poisons are located away from children, pets and non target wildlife at all times.



# Mice

*Pest information leaflet*



## Contact us

If you have any questions about the information in this leaflet or would like professional advice please contact

Leeds City Council Corporate Call Centre  
0113 2224406  
or email  
pests@leeds.gov.uk

Further information and copies of this leaflet can be found on the council's website  
[www.leeds.gov.uk/pestcontrol](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/pestcontrol)