

**Rat control
often takes an ongoing,
community effort.**

**Let's work together
to get rid of rats.**

**For more information
on rat control and sanitation
call your
local health department**



Office Toxic Substances
Pesticide and Surveillance Section
Zoonotic Disease Program
P.O. Box 47825
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RATS Let's Get Rid of Them

A large, stylized illustration of a rat's head and shoulders, rendered in shades of gray. The rat is facing forward, with its ears perked up and whiskers visible. The illustration is positioned behind the main title text.

Rats thrive on the stuff that people throw away. Rats are attracted to open garbage cans, table scraps, trash piles and pet food. They also like woodpiles, old furniture, abandoned cars and fence rows overgrown with weeds. If you give them a opening, they will come into your house.

How Do Rats Get Into Your House?

- Any small opening - even as small as the size of a dime
- Cracks and breaks in the foundation
- Burrowing under the foundation
- Spaces around pipes that go into your house from outside
- Holes in the floor around pipes and vents or inside walls
- Small gaps under doors
- Openings in the roof or eaves

Rats can be dangerous

Rats and their fleas can carry deadly diseases. They can destroy things in your home, and have even started fires by gnawing through electrical wires.

There are two main kinds of rats

The Roof Rat (*Rattus rattus*)

The roof rat lives in walls, attics and loose material such as empty boxes or rubbish piles. It can jump as high as 30 inches and is a good climber. It likes to eat grain and fresh food.



The Sewer Rat (*Rattus norvegicus*)

The sewer rat likes to burrow. It lives and breeds in sewers, basements and excavations. A sewer rat can dig through very hard soil and can even gnaw holes in concrete and wood beams. It can live in or near the water and is a good swimmer.



Keep Rats and Other Rodents Out of Your House

Starve them out

Keep garbage in tightly covered cans. Replace outdoor garbage cans that have holes, rusted bottoms or lids that don't fit.

Store pet food, bird seed and animal feed indoors in containers with tight fitting covers. Don't leave open pet food dishes outside.

Rats like to eat:

- Garbage
- Pet food, bird and animal feed
- Fallen fruit
- Food scraps
- Vegetable compost

Remove their shelter

Keep the area around your house clear of junk piles and debris. Keep grass and plants trimmed.

Don't pile or stack wood or other materials against walls. Keep areas under porches and steps clear.

In the basement, store boxes and other materials on stands 18 inches off the floor.

Keep the areas under sinks and behind appliances and cabinets clean and uncluttered.

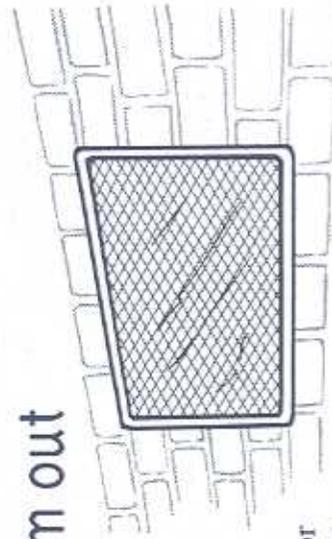
Build them out

Use 1/4 inch heavy wire mesh or screen to cover vents in the foundation. Plug up, screen or cover all openings bigger than 1/4 inch. Use sheet metal and steel wool to cover and plug holes.

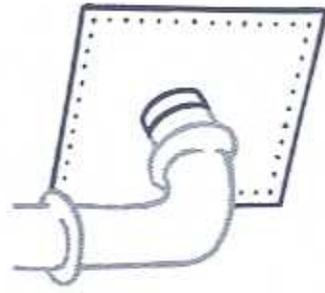
Make collars out of sheet metal to fit around pipes. Keep doors to the outside closed. Use springs to make sure they always close. Repair gaps bigger than 1/4 inch around outside doors.

Cover the edges of doors with sheet metal to stop rats from gnawing holes.

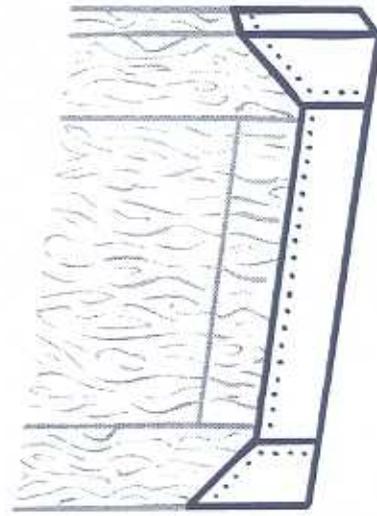
Keep floor drains tightly fastened.



Cover openings with screens



Make pipe collars out of sheet metal



Cover door edges with sheet metal

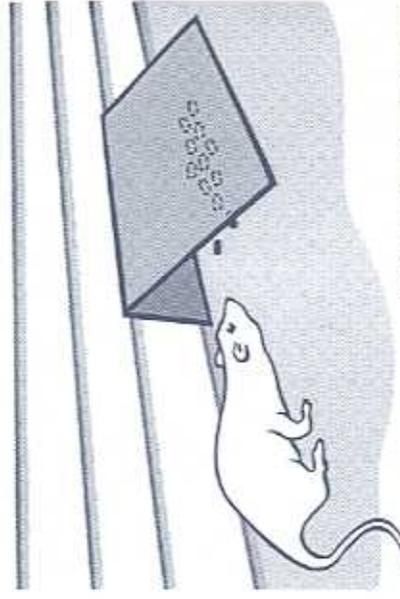
Get rid of them

Rat Traps

Snap traps are the cheapest and most effective way to catch rats. Use plenty of traps so you catch the rats before they recognize and avoid the traps. Place traps along baseboards, in corners, behind appliances and other places rats travel or hide. Peanut butter is a good bait. Or you can use whatever food the rats have been after.

Poisons

Follow the directions on the label exactly! Rat poisons can work well, but the rats may die in places you can't reach.



Set up poison bait stations

Bait stations

protect the poison bait from weather and help keep out pets. Also, rats like to eat in secure places, so bait stations are more effective. Place bait stations near woodpiles, garbage cans, fence rows and haystacks.

Traps and poisons can be purchased in most supermarkets and hardware stores.

Exterminators

Hiring a professional exterminator is another way to get rid of rodents. Choose a reputable company and make sure you understand about costs and methods.