

Mice

Although mice can live outdoors, mice, in general, are attracted inside our homes for shelter and food during the fall and winter season.

Generally mice, won't be seen during the day as they are nocturnal, and therefore looking for signs of mice may be a safer bet to confirm if you do have an existing problem.

Looking for the evidence they leave behind rather than the actual mice, is also often far easier than trying to catch a glimpse of the rodent to identify the species invading your home.

- **Mouse Droppings** - Usually the most easily identifiable sign of mice in any home. Mice produce a lot of droppings throughout the day and they're usually found along walls, in cupboards or under sinks. They are the size of a grain of rice, pointed at one or both ends and typically brown to black in color. The average length of a House mouse's dropping is $\frac{1}{4}$ inch.
- **Dirty Smudges** - Look for dirty smudges on floors or baseboards. Mice tend to run alongside walls as they don't have great eyesight and they tend to stick to the same route too. Over time the increased contact from their fur and body along the same stretch of wall leads to distinctive marks. You might also notice small patches of urine along the same route.
- **Distinctive Smell** - Noticed a funny smell recently? The presence of mice may also be established through a distinctive ammonia-like smell (very strong urine smell) that will be particularly obvious in more enclosed areas such as in cupboards. The smell helps mice orientate inside a home as it is often stronger along established routes and acts as a marker for their territory.
- **Mouse Damage** - Mice damage can include damage to furniture and wiring as well as to stored foods and other readily available food sources, leading to food contamination from their feces, urine or fur, which may cause Salmonella or rodent related diseases.

Mice have teeth that grow continuously and they need to gnaw on wood, plastic, cables and other hard materials to keep their teeth shorter. This is also the reason why mice can be seen as a fire hazard, as they are able to chew through electrical cables causing equipment malfunctions and power shortages.

In terms of food damage, they can make up to 20-30 visits per day to an identified food site. Adults will consume between 3 and 4 grams of food in one day and they prefer cereal grains, seeds, nuts, meats and candies. It is also important to note that they are fond of foods high in fat too, such as nuts, bacon, butter and sweets.

- **Scratching Noises** - Listen out for unusual or unfamiliar noises, especially at night when mice are most active. You may hear scratching noises in the walls or noises coming from ceilings above your head as mice scurry around. You might also hear them squeaking or gnawing.
- **Mouse nests** - Keep a look out for nests. Mice build nests with shredded material such as newspaper and fabrics. Nests tend to be in hidden places such as behind fridges, voids in walls, ceilings, cabinets and storage boxes etc., and relatively close to food sources. Nests will often contain young mice.
- **Live or dead mice** - Spotting a mouse during the daytime can be an indication of a heavy infestation.