

House Mice: Preventing and Managing in the Office Environment

What are House Mice?

They are small rodents with a body about 2.5 to 4 inches long, and have a tail about the length of their body. They have fur that is gray or gray-brown, moderately large ears, and weigh about an ounce. House mice are the most abundant and widespread mammals on earth, except for humans.

Are house mice dangerous?

In most cases, house mice are considered pests. Although the chance of getting bitten is very low and they don't transmit rabies or hantavirus, the presence of mice in the office environment should not be taken lightly. Mice multiply quickly, and in heavily infested buildings, their dead skin flakes, fur, urine, and feces can trigger asthma attacks in sensitive individuals. Their urine and feces can contaminate surfaces with *Salmonella* (food poisoning) bacteria, and they can do a great deal of damage by chewing on stored files and electrical wires.

What should I do if there are mice in my office building?

Report suspected cases of house mice to building management right away. Make a note of where you saw the mouse, its feces, or signs of damage that may have been done by a mouse. Report this to building management and the pest management professional (PMP) who arrives to service the building.

How can I prevent or control house mice?

Effective mouse control requires the cooperation of everyone involved. Building management, building occupants, and the pest management professional all share responsibility.

- **Sanitation**—Food waste should be discarded in trash cans with tight-fitting lids. Trash cans must be emptied each evening.
- **Exclusion**—Seal holes and gaps that allow mice to enter. Recommended materials include copper mesh products, metal, and concrete.
- **Direct Control**—Set traps/rodenticide baits in multiple locations wherever mice or signs are observed. This is most successful when performed by a PMP.
- **Inspection**—Have building management or the PMP conduct routine inspections of the building



Photo credit: National Institutes of Health/DHSS

House Mouse Facts

- A female mouse can produce up to 60 offspring in her lifetime.
- They like most foods and eat as wide a range of food as humans
- They travel an average of 10-30 feet from where they nest when searching for bedding and food
- They are able to squeeze through openings barely wider than a pencil
- They can live in walls, ceiling voids, under raised floors, inside boxes and equipment

Prevention Tips

- Store food in mouse-proof containers
- Use glass, metal, or heavy plastic containers
- Keep office space organized and free from clutter
- Don't store food at your desk
- If you see mice, feces or chewed paper, report it to the office manager

If you have any questions, call the Vector Management Program at (626) 430-5450.

1/4/2011