

# MICE: PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

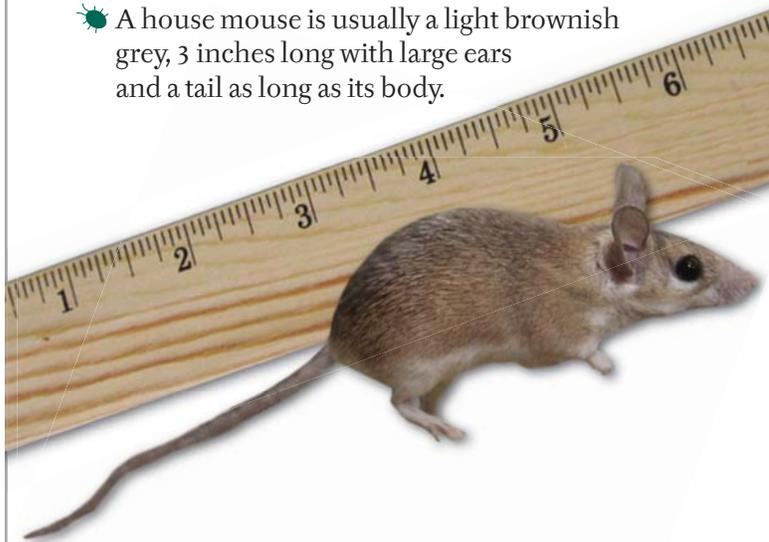
A FACTSHEET FROM MIDWEST PESTICIDE ACTION CENTER



MIDWEST PESTICIDE  
ACTION CENTER

## HOUSE MOUSE FACTS:

- A house mouse is usually a light brownish grey, 3 inches long with large ears and a tail as long as its body.



- House mice can live outdoors but prefer to live indoors. They seek out small hidden spaces inside walls and clutter.
- Keep an eye out for them in the fall. As weather grows colder mice will seek warmth and shelter.
- Mice eat whatever people do and will chew on almost anything.
- Female mice can have up to 100 babies a year. This means a mouse problem can quickly grow from a small one to a big one.

### Signs of a Mouse in Your House

Mouse droppings, gnaw (chew) marks, and seeing live or dead mice are all signs that you have a current and possibly growing mouse problem.



**Mouse Droppings**  
Average Length 1/4 inches  
Pointed ends

## PROBLEMS WITH MICE:

- Mice damage property and contaminate food. They can even chew electrical wiring, which can lead to fires.
- Mice spread diseases such as LCMV\* and can trigger asthma attacks.

## HOW TO GET RID OF MICE:

### Prevention

Prevention is best. These actions will keep a problem from starting in the first place.

- Repair any holes or gaps larger than ¼ inch wide: mice can squeeze through a hole the size of a dime



- Outside: Fill gaps and cracks in the foundation or around pipes entering the building and install door sweeps.
- Inside: Fill in holes in walls, including spaces around pipes like those under sinks. This will keep mice from getting inside the walls and spreading to the rest of the building.

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Midwest Pesticide Action Center is dedicated to reducing the health risks and environmental impacts of pesticides and promoting safer alternatives.



# MICE: PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS *(continued)*

- ☛ Good housekeeping is the key to prevention and control:
  - Clean to the corners especially in the kitchen or other areas where food is eaten;
  - Clean under stoves, refrigerators and other heavy furniture and appliances;
  - Store human and pet food in tightly sealed metal, plastic or glass containers and store garbage in containers with lids;
  - Use a mild soap to clean areas where mice have been seen or active.
- ☛ Remove clutter to reduce hiding spaces and make cleaning and control easier.



## TREATMENT

When prevention fails to keep all mice out, these suggestions can help get rid of the ones that got in. Here are a few of the most common.

- ☛ **Snap Traps:** Place snap traps in areas where mice activity was spotted. Bait with peanut butter or other tasty treats – make sure all other food is cleaned up in the area. Other baits can include cotton balls or shredded paper. Mice like to travel along the wall so place the trap as close to a wall as possible.

- ☛ **Glue Traps:** These traps should be placed along the wall and are best at catching young mice. Bait as you would a snap trap. Check the traps often and be careful to protect yourself from trapped live mice. Use gloves and dispose of mice as humanely as possible by drowning or freezing.
- ☛ **“Humane” Traps:** These are traps that capture live mice. There are many different designs. They are usually baited and the mice are trapped live inside and can be released after capture. **DO NOT** release trapped mice near your home or they will find their way back.
- ☛ **Bait Boxes:** Baits are not recommended for mouse control inside a building. They are designed for mice to eat the poisoned bait and die. However, they can die anywhere inside a home and cause odors or other problems. Not recommended for homes with young children or small pets. **USE WITH EXTREME CAUTION** and as a last resort.
- ☛ **Sound Repellants:** These devices disrupt communication between mice and annoy mice by making a sound that cannot be heard by humans. There is little scientific proof that using these devices will control for mice, but they can work to flush mice out from wells, roofs, or other remote areas.
- ☛ **Biological Controls:** A cat may be helpful in preventing mice from entering your home in the first place or catch the occasional mouse that enters your home. However, not all cats are trained to catch mice and cannot be relied on to stop the problem.
- ☛ **Be Persistent:** Keep on top of the problem until it is fully controlled. It will take time.

*\* LCMV stands for leukocytic choriomeningitis virus and is a virus that attacks the nervous system. It is most dangerous to young children and pregnant women and can result in spontaneous abortions or birth defects.*