

# RODENT AWARENESS AND PREVENTION



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
Township of Bloomfield  
Department of  
Health & Human Services



**NJCU**  
NEW JERSEY CITY UNIVERSITY



# What exactly are Rodents?

Rodents include different species, such as squirrels, chipmunks, rats, and mice. In the United States, they play an essential role in the environment including being a food source for some predators **(About Rats and Mice, 2018)**.

But... some rodents, such as house mice, are considered pests when they infest and destroy property and begin to threaten overall public health.



House mouse



Norway rat / Brown rat



Squirrel



Chipmunk

## Why YOU should be concerned!

Rodents can carry over 35 diseases. They can be spread to humans by both direct and indirect contact **(Rodents, 2010)**.

### Direct Contact

- Touching
- Waste
- Bites

### Indirect Contact

- Insects
- Trigger Asthma
- Allergens

Their droppings can contaminate the air we breathe, food, and water **(About Rats and Mice, 2018)**.

***Fact:*** Rodents are named for their front teeth that are consistently growing.

# CAUSES OF RODENT INFESTATION

Rodents are primarily found in areas where trash pile ups, construction sites, and abandoned buildings within many of these areas give rodents spaces to hide, create tunnels between their nest and food source, and build their colony.



They are attracted to unsanitary conditions and spaces that supply them with 3 **essential** survival needs:

A place to **eat**

A place to **sleep**

A place to **breed**

If these are eliminated, rodents will not colonize. They will search for another way to meet their needs or, eventually, die (**Nadakavukaren, 2013**).



**Fact:** *Construction sites must be approved for a demolition by the Health Department. One requirement for this permit is Proof of Inspection from a licensed pest control service. These permits are accessible to residents.*

# LET'S START WITH THE BASICS...

## Keep a **Clean** Space



- **DECLUTTER it!** Mice will collect loose paper and materials to create nests for sleeping and breeding. Decluttering will discourage this.
- **STORE it!** Store food in tightly sealed containers. If you have pets, store their food in sealed containers instead of in an open bowl. Try not to leave their water out for too long.
- **SCRUB it!** Thoroughly clean counters, stove tops, utensils, and other tools or appliances after each use. Be sure to do the same around the baseboards of the home to remove any residue.
- **WIPE it!** After using the sink, remove any excess water left behind and on any surfaces around it. Do not forget the baseboards!!
- **SEAL IT!** Opt for hard plastic or metal trash containers with tight lids in addition to rodent-resistant garbage bags.

**Fact:** *House mice can survive for long lengths of time on the water they consume from their food alone.*

# **SANITATION IN AND AROUND THE HOME...**

- Sources of food in and around the home should be **eliminated**
- Place dumpsters or trash cans an acceptable distance from the residence and **keep area clean**
- Arrange for trash collection twice a week or more. Pick up should **be consistent** so rodents do not rely on the trash as a food source.
- Areas where standing water can accumulate should be **leveled out**, especially those around air conditioning units. This could turn into a **point of entry for rodents**
- Leaking pipes and faucets should be assessed and either **fixed or replaced**
- Rodents can swim and tend to travel through plumbing pipes. **Keep the toilet seat down!**



**IT MAKES A DIFFERENCE!!**



## **MARKINGS**

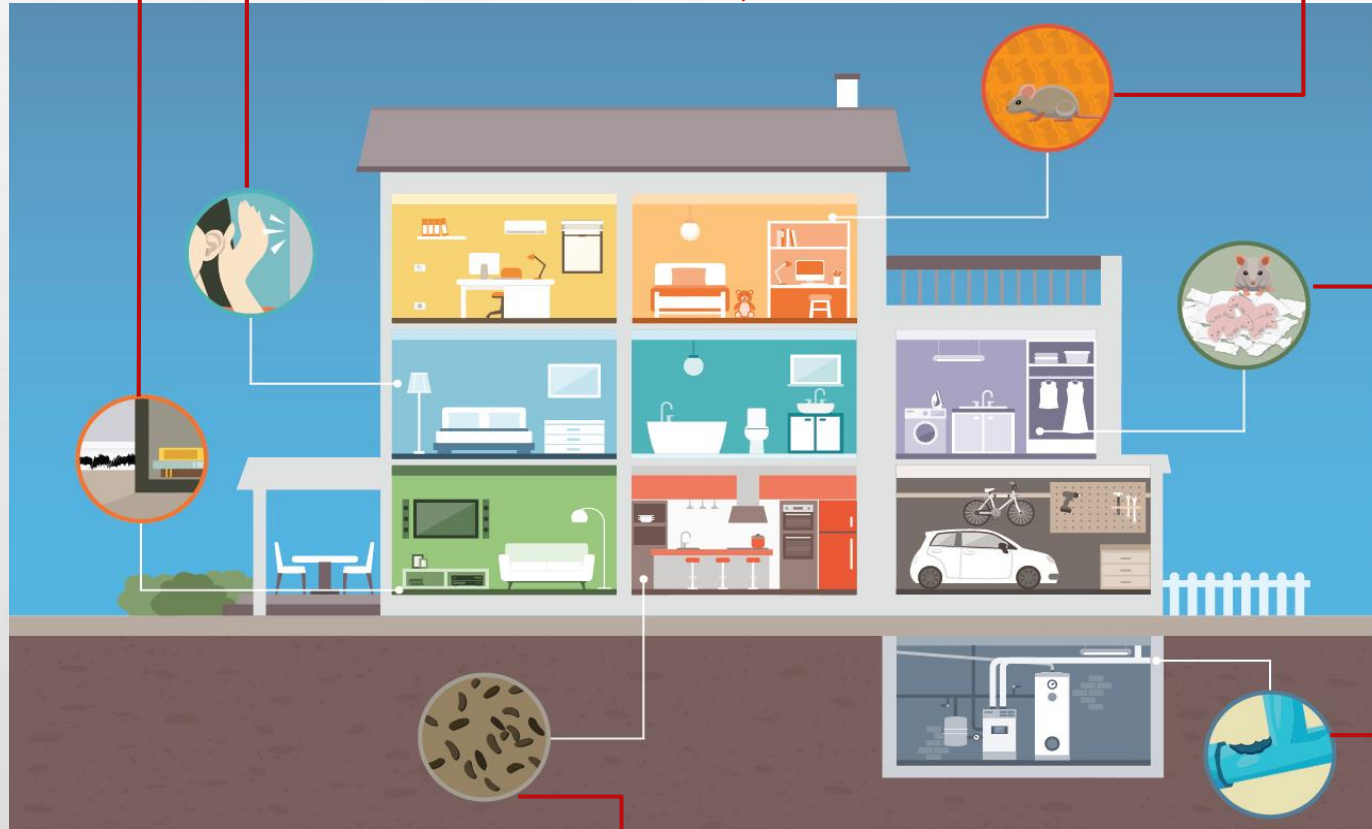
Tracks or rub marks along baseboards and walls

## **NOISES**

Strange sounds at night can mean a family of rodents in the walls

## **RODENT SIGHTING**

One female house mouse can birth up to 6 mice. With breeding happening fast, if you see one, there are probably others.



## **NESTING**

In dark, undisturbed spaces, rodents tend to make their nests out of shredded paper or even wall trimmings.

## **GNAWING**

With their constant chewing, rodents can destroy materials they are able to penetrate, including pipes and wires.

# CHECK IN ON YOUR HOME!

Fig. 1: 6 Signs of Rodents (Pestworld, 2018)

## **DROPPINGS**

Pellets are often found in places where food is stored

**Fact:** *Rats can enter structures through ½-inch holes and mice through ¼-inch holes*

# THE FAMOUS SNAP TRAP

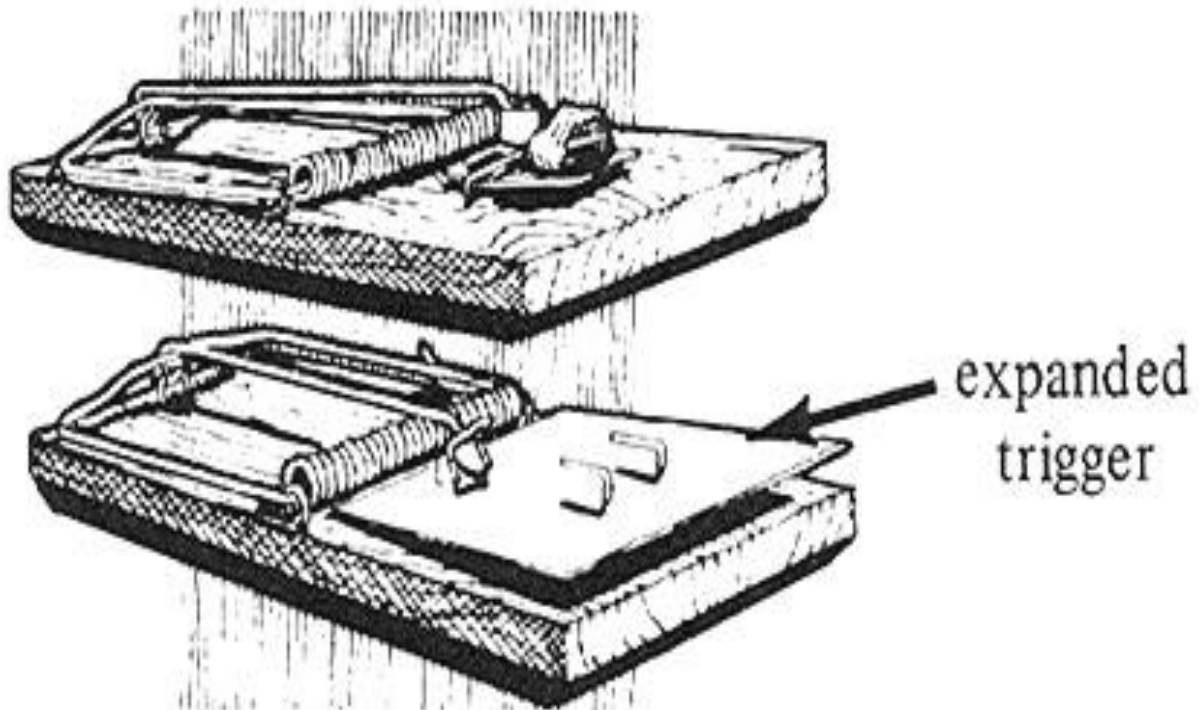


Figure 2: Rodent trap options (Municipal Pests Management, 2018)

- **Still effective but many are hesitant to remove them due to fear of the rodent**
- **Should be placed along walls and can be back to back to catch rodents who might have missed or avoided the first one**
- **Work best when used with bait such as food or nesting materials**



# BAITING

This method can be used alongside trapping and proper building strategies but not alone as it may not be as effective.

## Nonchemical

- Use multiple baits to provide a variety of choices dependent on what food sources the rodents have had access to
- Rodents are smart and may notice a new object in their territory, resulting in them avoiding the bait
- Try using nesting materials, such as loose string, cotton balls, or paper. It is likely that pregnant rodents may be on the hunt for these items
- Mice are easily convinced while rats are more skeptical; it may take longer to get rid of rats due to this

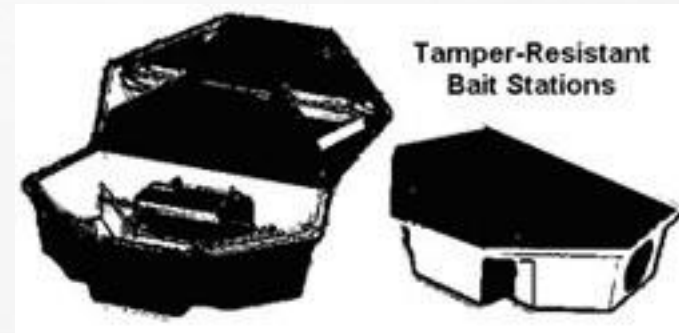


Figure 3: Rodent trap options (Municipal Pests Management, 2018)

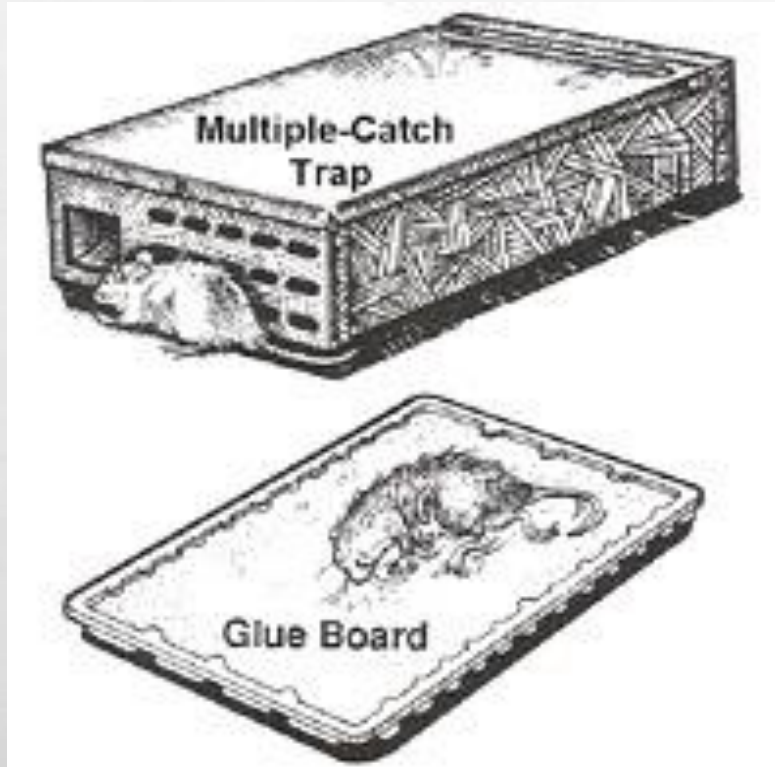
## Chemical

- Rodenticides (poisons that kill rodents) can be used if the above methods are not effective
- Toxicants that can harm people, pets, and other non-targeted animals if not used with precaution
- Bait-stations with rodenticides should be tamper-resistant
- Make sure fresh bait is available continuously until mice stop feeding

**Fact:** *Bait can be placed in burrows and ways of travel for rodents that are not accessible to others. The area can be checked every 24 hours for any rodents that may need to be removed*

# TRAPPING: AN INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT (IPM) OPTION

Rodents, particularly rats and mice, are smart mammals. To eliminate them, prevention methods should range from the usual mouse trap to more natural strategies. By alternating the form of treatment, the rodents may be unsuspecting and fall for the bait!



Within homes and apartment units, glue boards are often used to eliminate pests. Unfortunately, once a colony is aware of where the glue trap is, they manage to work their way around it.

The multiple-catch trap is an option for infestations. There is no pesticide use and one trap can capture a minimum of twelve mice. Since they are creatures of habit, mice will go for familiar foods in the area they are in. Those foods can be placed in the trap to attract them.

Figure 4: Rodent trap options (Municipal Pests Management, 2018)

**Fact:** *Snap traps are more effective than glue traps because the rodent is killed instantly. On glue traps, rodents are alive for a period of time and can contaminate the air with their urine or feces until they are removed or die.*

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