

Ask an Expert: Find a Mouse in Your House? Try These Cleaning Tips

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As the summer temperatures begin to fade into cooler days and evenings, rodents will be looking for warm places to sleep and create nests for their young. It is important to be proactive in finding the locations where these unwanted critters may try to enter your home. If they still make their way inside regardless of your efforts, the Centers for Disease Control offers helpful tips in cleanup and removal of infested areas. (<http://www.cdc.gov/rodents/cleaning/>)

1) Clean up urine and droppings.

- * When you begin cleaning, do not stir up dust by sweeping or vacuuming droppings, urine or nesting materials.
- * Wear rubber, latex or vinyl gloves when cleaning urine and droppings. If the infestation is heavy, consider wearing a N95 disposable dust mask.
- * Spray the urine and droppings with a disinfectant or a mixture of bleach and water and let soak 5 minutes. The recommended concentration of bleach solution is 1 part bleach to 10 parts water. When using a commercial disinfectant, follow the manufacturer's instructions on the label for dilution and disinfection time.
- * Use a paper towel to pick up urine and droppings, and dispose of it in the garbage.
- * After the waste has been removed, disinfect items that might have become contaminated

2) Clean and disinfect the entire area.

- * Mop floors and clean countertops with disinfectant or bleach solution.
- * Steam clean or shampoo upholstered furniture and carpets with evidence of rodent exposure.
- * Wash any bedding and clothing with laundry detergent in hot water if exposed to rodent waste.
- * Remove gloves, and thoroughly wash hands with soap and water, or use a waterless alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap is not available and hands are not visibly soiled.

If you find evidence of mice in other buildings on your property, the same guidelines apply. However, before attempting to clean cabins, sheds, barns or other outbuildings, open all doors and windows for 30 minutes. This will allow fresh air to enter the work area.

The CDC website has further information on cleaning buildings once they have been aired out as well as information on cleaning clothing, stuffed toys, books, papers, non-washable items, carpets and furniture. Specific questions may also be answered by contacting your local Health Department. Contact information and factsheets are found at <http://health.utah.gov/>.

By: Kathleen Riggs, Utah State University Extension family and consumer sciences professor, kathleen.riggs@usu.edu What Next? Get useful tips like this as soon as we release them. Sign up here.