



NEWS RELEASE

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COUNTY HEALTH DEPT. OFFERS TIPS TO COMBAT RODENT PROBLEMS

People May Notice Rodent Activity As They Spend More Time Outdoors in Warm Weather

The Allegheny County Health Department is offering residents information and advice on how to combat rodent problems in and about their homes.

"We get more rodent complaints at this time of the year because people are outdoors and more likely to notice rodent activity in their yards and neighborhoods," said County Health Director Dr. Bruce W. Dixon.

The first step to solving a rodent problem is to make sure that your own property does not offer rats the food and shelter they need to survive.

If another property is strewn with garbage and debris and creating a rodent problem in your neighborhood, please file a complaint with the Health Department and the owner will be ordered to clean up. Complaints can be reported by calling the Allegheny County Health Department at 4112-687-ACHD.

Health officials recommend the following tips to prevent rodent problems:

- Store garbage properly, since it accounts for 80% of a rat's diet.
- Drain moisture out of your garbage before placing it in plastic bags. This will reduce odors, cut down on the breeding of flies and limit spills during handling and removal.
- Use a kitchen garbage can with a lid and a plastic liner.
- In addition to the kitchen garbage can, store garbage in at least one 30-35 gallon container with a tight-fitting lid for every two people in the household. Use bungee cords or rope to tie down loose-fitting lids.
- Don't leave plastic bags containing garbage and awaiting pickup outside, on the porch or in the garage overnight. Rats are most active at night and move in once they find a steady source of food. You may not notice the small holes they chew in bags until it's too late.
- Clean the garbage storage area after each collection and frequently wash your cans.
- Don't let dog food sit out for more than an hour after feeding time and clean up your pet's waste daily, because rats will feed on your pet's food and it's waste.
- Don't throw bread or seed on the ground to feed birds. It is a violation of regulations because it will attract rodents.
- If you feed birds, use a birdfeeder and clean the ground under the feeder weekly.
- Store grains such as rice, cereals and pasta in metal or glass containers; store potatoes and onions in the refrigerator or in metal or glass containers, store dry pet foods and bird seed in metal cans with tight-fitting lids.
- Old Cars no longer in use and household items such as chairs, sofas and refrigerators should be hauled away from your yard, porch or driveway as soon as they are discarded so they don't become a nesting place or hiding place for rodents.
- Don't let items you'll never use again accumulate in your basement or attic.
- To keep rats out of your house, close holes in floors, baseboards and especially openings in exterior walls and foundations for water, sewer and gas lines.
- Close exterior doors tightly because rats can enter through openings as small as a half-inch and make sure basement windows fit tightly and have no broken glass.

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