

## Mice in Food Establishments

Mice can contaminate food supplies with their urine, feces or with the surface of their bodies. Mice pick up germs, such as salmonella, when they crawl over or eat decaying food and garbage. As mice travel around the kitchen nibbling on food, urinating and leaving fecal droppings, the germs are transmitted to food, food counters, shelves, utensils, etc.

This bulletin offers basic information about mice and their control within your food premises. **Preventing** an infestation in your establishment is critical.

Should a mouse infestation become so severe that the safety of foods cannot be guaranteed and/or utensils and food surfaces cannot be protected from contamination, your premises could be subject to closure.



Failure to maintain your premises pest free may also result in the issuance of orders, violation tickets, or other legal action.

### Controlling Mice

The control of mice in a food establishment requires a combination of actions. Listed below are some effective measures to control mice:

- Seal any holes or openings where mice may gain entry. Fill in the spaces around pipes, vents, and drain spouts where they enter the building. All holes greater than six millimetres (1/4 inch) should be sealed.
- Inspect all incoming deliveries for signs of infestation or contamination by mouse urine or droppings. Any deliveries that are infested or contaminated should be returned to the supplier.
- Store all food at least 6 inches off the floor and keep the floor level open.
- Rotate your stock regularly to prevent any areas from remaining undisturbed for long periods of time.
- Maintain a high level of sanitation throughout the food establishment. Remove all food sources at the end of each day (including crumbs, spills, food residues, etc.).
- Employ a certified pest control company to provide eradication and monitoring services. Ensure the recommendations made by your pest control company are followed.

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## Mouse Lifespan

A small problem can rapidly become a big problem if not addressed. Female mice can produce up to eight litters each year with five to six young in each litter. Three months after being born, mice are capable of reproducing.

## Where Mice Live

Mice will nest in dark, warm, quiet areas and near food. Spaces in double walls and closed-off areas beneath counters and in storage areas make ideal nesting sites.

Mice tend to be most active at night when it's dark and no one is around. Mouse sightings during the middle of the day often indicate a large infestation.

Mice can adapt to stressful environments. Mice can become dormant to save energy during extremely hot or cold conditions. In addition, mice can survive with no water. Mice require only one or two millilitres of water each day, which they can get from foods such as cereals.

## Infestation Sources

Infestations may result when mice enter from neighbouring establishments through openings in walls and ceilings. Deliveries are a major source of infestation.

## Protection of Food

Store dry food supplies in metal, glass, or plastic containers with tight fitting lids whenever possible.

Clean and sanitize food contact surfaces at the start of each day to remove rodent droppings and urine that may have been deposited the previous night.

Inspect premises regularly for signs of infestation such as droppings or damaged foodstuff.

### **It is critical that mice are controlled as soon as the first signs are found.**

Early control of mouse populations will prevent the possibility of large infestations which are difficult and expensive to eradicate. It is important to have a certified pest control company to carry out effective control and monitoring services. In addition to pest control services, using a combination of good sanitation, environment modification and physical barriers within your premises, will help ensure that mouse infestations are prevented and controlled.

If you have any questions regarding a pest infestation, please contact your local Environmental Health Officer.

Your local Environmental Health office is just a phone call away:

- Abbotsford (604) 870-7900
- Agassiz (604) 793-7160
- Burnaby (604) 918-7683
- Chilliwack (604) 702-4950
- Delta (604) 507-5478
- Hope (604) 867-7630
- Langley (604) 514-6121
- Mission (604) 814-5515
- New Westminster (604) 777-6740
- Ridge Meadows (604) 476-7000
- Surrey (604) 930-5405
- Tri-Cities (604) 949-7700

For further information, or if you have any questions, contact your local Environmental Health Services office.

Website: [www.fraserhealth.ca/your\\_environment/](http://www.fraserhealth.ca/your_environment/)