

# Dealing with pests in your home

A-Z of common  
pest problems



## Dealing with pests in your home

We know that having little unwanted visitors in your home and garden can be stressful and worrying. But don't worry – if you're experiencing pest issues in your home, there are lots of places you can go for help. You'll be able to solve some problems quickly and easily yourself. For others, you may need to ask us, your local authority, or a private pest controller for help. We've listed the most common issues below, but if you have any questions about another type of pest, please contact us.

### Bedbugs

Bedbugs are adventurers, which means they've probably got into your house from somewhere else. They can travel in on your clothes from someone else's home, hide in luggage when you go on holiday or creep in on other soft furnishings like a second-hand chair.

Cleaning is your best defence against bedbugs. Regularly washing bedding and cushions, adding vacuuming your mattresses and under the bed into your cleaning routine will all help.

If you find bedbugs in your home, you might be able to treat them yourself with a special insecticide. Many local authorities also help with bedbugs. Remember – don't put anything you've used to clean bedbugs in another uninfected part of the house as they may spread. If you're vacuuming up bedbugs, empty them out in an outdoor bin.

### Bees



Bees are super important to our environment – we need them to pollinate our wildlife! Bees are an endangered species so we have to treat them with care, but there's a few things you can do to stop them getting into your home or being a nuisance in your garden.

To avoid bees buzzing around your outside bins, make sure they're always closed properly, especially if there's food waste in there. The British Beekeepers association has lots of information on what to do if you have a bee problem.



Your local authority might be also able to help with bees. If you think you've got bees nesting in a hole in the masonry or brickwork in your home, contact us and let us know.

### Cockroaches

Cockroaches are rare in the UK but nevertheless, they do pop up sometimes. Cockroaches are attracted to things like food waste and stagnant water, so keeping your surfaces clean and clear, keeping your food in airtight containers, disposing of food waste properly in a closed bin that is regularly collected, and making sure that you get rid of any old, dirty water that might collect in your garden, bathroom and kitchen can all help to avoid the problem.

If you spot any holes or cracks in the outer walls of your home, please do contact us to get them sealed in to avoid any pests, including cockroaches, using them to get in. If you have any leaks or notice water collecting anywhere in your home or building, let us know so we can investigate. If you do find cockroaches in your home, please call your local authority right away. They may refer you to a private contractor and there can be costs associated with treatment.

### Clothes moths

Normal moths cause us very little nuisance. However, if you've ever pulled out your lovely wool jumpers out for winter and found them full of tiny holes, you might have clothes moths. Clothes moths are a specific type of moths that like to eat natural fibres.

You will most commonly find them in your wool or cotton clothing, but sometimes in your carpets or your bedding if they are made of natural materials.

Washing the affected clothes or areas is the best way to get rid of clothes moths. There are lots of over the counter treatments for moths – just make sure they are pet and child safe. There are lots of natural remedies to get rid of clothes moths, some people find cedarwood and cedar oil in your wardrobes and drawers are an effective moth repellent.

## Fleas

Those of us with cats and dogs who go outside know that we're at risk of fleas visiting sometimes, but they're easy to prevent and treat. Occasionally fleas can get into your home through other means, such as a piece of furniture that's been infected, or if you've visited a friend's home that has a flea problem you can bring them back on your clothes. If a flea problem is left untreated they can be really hard to get out of your carpets and other soft furnishings so it's important to act quickly.

If fleas come into the house on your pets, get them a regular flea treatment. Ask for vet for advice on the best flea treatment for your pet, you can buy flea treatment at any vet, pet shop or supermarket. To get rid of fleas that have got in your rugs, carpet and furniture, you can purchase a home flea spray, and then vacuum really thoroughly to get rid of any remaining fleas or eggs. If you've got a really serious flea problem that you can't solve using these tips, or you're not sure how the fleas are coming in, or they keep coming back, contact your local authority for advice.

## Garden insects: Slugs, caterpillars and ants

It's really normal to have slugs, caterpillars and ants in your garden, and you might see them more frequently in different seasons. They're mostly harmless and don't cause too much of a nuisance, but if you do have a problem with them, or they start coming inside the house, they're incredibly easy to get rid of.

You can buy lots of over the counter treatments to get rid of these creatures. The best plan of action is to find where they're entering from and leave the treatment on the outside wall to prevent them coming in in the first place. You might find that

if you've got a vegetable garden and you find slugs are getting in, you can buy environmentally friendly slug-pellets that won't harm your vegetables or any pets.

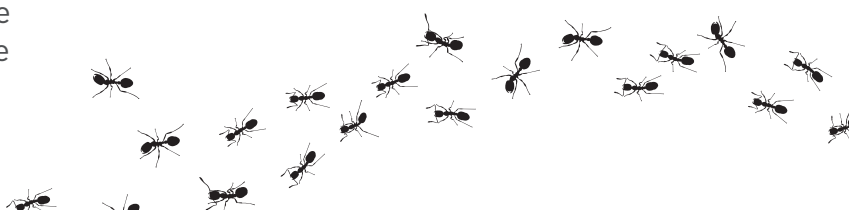
## Rats and Mice

Having rats and mice in your home can be really stressful. Rodents like these tend to be scavengers and they're attracted to food, rubbish and overgrown gardens. They tend to enter homes through drainpipes or holes in the outer walls or loft in your home. You might find that they're more attracted to older homes than new ones, as it can be easier for them to get in.

To prevent rats and mice there are a few things you can do inside and outside of your house to stop attracting them. Try not to leave any uncovered pet food outside as this is incredibly attractive to rodents. If you have a bird feeder, try to make sure it's quite high up as bird feed can encourage them too. If you have bins, compost or food waste outside, make sure it's properly covered. Inside your home, make sure your food is properly sealed in airtight containers. Even things like the crumbs under your toaster can attract them so make sure things like this are cleaned regularly.

Keeping your garden clean, clear and free of rubbish or old unwanted items can really help to prevent rats and mice being attracted to your home and garden.

If you are experiencing rats or mice in your home, please tell us. When you get in contact, it'll be really useful for us to know if you can see where they're coming in so we can carry out a repair to block their access. We'll also ask whether there's anything that might be encouraging the rats or mice, such as a communal bin store or overgrown garden. Your local authority will be able to help you with rats or mice, but there might be a charge. It can take up to three visits from pest control to get rid of rats or mice.



## Silverfish

You might have seen silverfish in your bathroom. They like damp, wet environments. They are usually harmless but you might find them to be a nuisance, as they can sometimes get into dried food, or damage your books or clothes. Luckily they're easy to get rid of.

To make sure your home isn't a nice damp environment for silverfish, make sure you regularly ventilate your kitchen and bathroom, or any other areas you find them, by opening windows and doors, and using your extractor fan. If you are worried you have a damp or mould problem in your home, contact us right away so we can help you. To get rid of silverfish, you can buy treatments online or in most supermarkets.

## Spiders

Lots of us hate spiders, but we're lucky that most of the spiders in the UK are absolutely harmless. Spiders, like us, can be particular about the weather so you might find they come inside more in the winter months.

There are lots of ways you can make your home less welcoming to spiders. Vacuuming and dusting regularly will keep them away, and often essential oils like peppermint, tea tree and cinnamon can repel them without harming them. For the most part, if you see one or two spiders in your home you can just trap them in a glass and place them back outside. But if you're worried about the quantity or type of spiders you're seeing in your home, contact your local authority or a pest controller.



## Squirrels

It's really unusual to have squirrels causing a nuisance in your home or garden. But occasionally if you live in an area with lots of trees, they might find their way into your roof or loft space

If you're worried you've got squirrels in the loft, please do contact us so we can have a look at where they might be coming in and how we can move them on.

## Wasps

We know wasps aren't the friendliest of creatures and finding a nest in your home can be a pain. Wasps like many of the other creatures on this list are attracted to rubbish, so make sure your bins are closed and that no waste is placed on top of or beside them.

You can buy wasp repellent in shops. But if you have a wasps' nest, please seek advice before tackling it so you don't get stung. There's lots of information online on how to deal with wasps safely. Your local authority might also be able to help, or you can contact a private pest controller. If wasps are living in the masonry or brickwork of your home, please contact us so we can fill the holes in and prevent them from coming back.

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