



Cleaning Tips to Prevent Diseases from Mice and Rats

Mice and rats (rodents) can carry and spread diseases to people. Some of these diseases can be spread to people by direct contact with rodents or their urine or droppings (excreta), or by breathing in excreta or nesting particles that get into the air. One such disease is hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS), a serious disease caused by a virus that affects your lungs. To prevent HPS and other diseases carried by rodents, it is important to protect yourself when performing certain activities that can put you at risk for infection. Some of these activities include:

- Improperly cleaning up mouse and rat urine, droppings and nests
- Cleaning a shed or cabin that has been closed for some time
- Working in areas where mice and rats may live (such as barns)

Take these steps to protect yourself when cleaning out cabins, sheds, barns or other buildings inhabited by mice or rats.

1. Open doors and windows for at least 30 minutes for ventilation.
2. Wear rubber or plastic gloves and a dust mask.
3. Mop floors or spray dirt floors with a 1:10 bleach solution or use disinfectant approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Allow areas with urine and droppings to soak for 5 minutes before cleaning. Do not use a broom to sweep areas with rodent droppings- this could stir up particles of droppings into the air that could be breathed in and make you sick.
4. Spray any dead mice, rats, or nests, as well as the surrounding area, with a bleach solution or disinfectant and let it soak. Place nesting material and dead rodents in a plastic bag. Seal the bag and place in a second plastic bag. Seal the second bag and place in a covered trash can that is regularly taken out.
5. Use a paper towel to wipe up urine or droppings. Throw the paper towel in the trash.
6. Wash gloved hands with soap and water or spray a disinfectant or bleach solution on gloves before taking them off.
7. Wash hands with soap and water after taking off gloves.

For more information:

- Call Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821 or visit the Maine CDC hantavirus website at www.mainepublichealth.gov/hantavirus.
- Visit the federal CDC hantavirus website at www.cdc.gov/hantavirus.