

# TRAP UP! Seal up! Clean up!

PROTECTING YOUR STORAGE SHED, YOUR PROPERTY, AND YOURSELF  
FROM RODENTS

## TRAP UP: Keep buildings safe from rodents

The best way to prevent rodent infestation and contact with rodents is to remove the food sources, water, and items that provide shelter for rodents. If rodents are present in your storage area or home, eliminate them by using "snap-traps" baited with a peanut butter/oatmeal mix. Position the bait end of the trap next to the wall so it forms a "T" with the wall. Rodents prefer to run next to walls or other objects for safety and do not like being out in the open. You will be more successful with trapping if you eliminate any food sources and seal entrances to the building to keep new rodents from moving in. Continue trapping as long as you suspect rodents are living in the building.

## SEAL UP: Seal up holes to prevent entry

Mice can squeeze through a hole the width of a pen ( $\frac{1}{4}$  inch)! Prevent rodents from entering by checking your storage building or home for gaps or holes. Fill small holes with steel wool. Put caulk around the steel wool to keep it in place. Look for gaps or holes:

- In the roof among the rafters, gables, and eaves
- Around windows
- Around doors
- Around the foundation
- In attic vents and crawl space vents
- Under doors
- Around holes for electrical, plumbing, cable, and gas lines

## CLEAN UP: Clean up rodent food sources and nesting sites

❶ Air out rodent-infested buildings or areas at least 30 minutes before cleaning. Do not sweep or dry vacuum rodent contaminated surfaces. This may stir up dust and allow potentially contaminated dust to be breathed in.

❷ Use a solution of household bleach (one cup bleach per gallon of water) to disinfect rodent carcasses before handling. Spray contaminated materials with the bleach solution and allow it to soak in for 5-10 minutes before cleaning with a mop, sponge, or wet (shop) vacuum. Wear gloves, and disinfect them and the trap afterwards.

❸ In heavily rodent-infested areas or in situations where ventilation and/or wet cleanup cannot be effectively done, use a face mask with a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter.

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# Protect Yourself from Hantavirus

Certain wild rodents, mainly deer mice, carry a serious respiratory disease called Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome (HPS). It is passed to humans through contact with a rodent's infected urine, droppings, or saliva. Breathing in contaminated mist or dust is the most common way the disease is transmitted.

## What are the symptoms?

Initial symptoms of HPS include fever, headache, and muscle pain; severe abdominal, joint, and lower back pain; nausea; and vomiting. Cough and shortness of breath usually develops 1 to 5 days after symptoms begin. The primary symptom of HPS is difficulty breathing due to fluid build-up in the lungs. This can quickly progress to respiratory failure.

## How serious is it?

HPS is extremely serious and can be fatal. Through March 26, 2007, a total of 465 cases of the disease have been reported in the United States. Thirty-five percent of all reported cases have resulted in death.



Deer Mouse (*Peromyscus maniculatus*)  
Photo credit: CDC

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Boulder County Public Health  
303.441.1564  
[www.BoulderCountyHealth.org](http://www.BoulderCountyHealth.org)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
[www.cdc.gov/rodents/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/rodents/index.htm)

CSU Extension Office  
303.678.6238  
[www.coopext.colostate.edu/wildlife](http://www.coopext.colostate.edu/wildlife)

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