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Public Health

COCKROACHES

AN UNWANTED HOUSEGUEST

What are cockroaches?

A cockroach is an insect that loves to live in peoples' homes. It likes to hide until dark, then come out and eat and drink. There are two main types of cockroaches that live inside our homes: the German cockroach (*Blattella germanica*) and the Brown-banded cockroach (*Supella longipalpa*). Both can spread disease by tracking what they have walked through on food and food preparation areas. Dust from their body parts and waste can make asthma worse and even cause asthma in preschool-aged children. The dust can also make allergies worse.

German cockroaches are about $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch long, brown with "racing stripes" running down their bodies behind their heads. They like to live where it's warm and wet, so kitchens and bathrooms are favorite hiding spots.

Brown-banded cockroaches are smaller, about $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch, with bands that run side to side on their bodies. They like to live high up and dry, so you'll find them behind pictures and electrical clocks.

Roaches breed rapidly: a single pregnant female roach can have more than 18,000 descendants in six months, so it's better to control them earlier rather than later.

How do I know I have cockroaches?

When you switch on a light in a dark room or open a drawer, roaches will quickly scatter for cover and you may not notice them. In fact, if you do see cockroaches out in daylight, you likely have a bad roach problem.

Since they like to come out when it's dark, look for other signs of roaches. One of the easiest to spot is frass, which are roach body parts and their waste. It looks a lot like ground pepper. If you see frass around a crack or crevice, you've likely found where roaches are hiding. The Pest Control company might bring sticky traps and put them near areas where roaches are commonly found. A mix of big and little roaches on the trap means you're near their hiding spot.

Typical hiding spots include:



German Cockroach

How do I get rid of cockroaches?

Roaches need food, water and shelter to live, so the best thing to do is to eliminate their food, water and shelter. It's not as easy as it sounds.

Roaches can last a month without food, but only a week without water. Covering up sink drains at night will keep them from drinking from the drain trap.

A single drop of grease can feed 20 roaches for a day, so keep counters and appliances clean. Also clean and dry your dishes immediately after you finish eating.

Roaches like to be in tight spots. Look for cracks, crevices and openings around pipes. Request a visit from maintenance to seal them up. Also, remove cardboard containers and any clutter.

The Pest Control Company might put out baits or use other treatment methods. Don't do any type of spraying or setting off "bug bombs". Using sprays will only make the baits less appealing to the roaches, and can be dangerous to people and pets.

You are a very important member of the pest management team. It is your part to report cockroaches to management and to make sure that cockroaches can't find food or water in your home.

Report cockroaches and water leaks to your landlord or property manager.



Brown-banded Cockroach