

GETTING YOUR ASTHMA UNDER CONTROL: CONTROLLING RODENT ALLERGIES AT HOME A FACTSHEET FROM THE MOUNT SINAI ASTHMA PROGRAM



Did you know...?

Rodents like mice and rats can cause symptoms such as coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath and chest tightness in people who have asthma and are allergic to rodents. If you have rodent allergies, you are not just allergic to the live rodent but also to their skin flakes, saliva, and urine. Rodent allergens can be found in all over a house where one or more rodents have been seen.

How do I know if I have rodent allergies?

An allergy test by a doctor can help determine if your asthma and allergy symptoms may be due to contact with rodent allergen.

What can be done to control rodents in my home?

Successfully ridding your home of rodents may take more than one approach. Below are some tips to help you get started:

- ❶ **Look around your home** – try to figure out where in your home the rodents are hiding, where they travel thru the house, and how they get into the home (e.g., holes and small spaces under doors or windows). Look for the live rodent and their droppings.
- ❷ **Repair** – any cracks or holes where the rodent may be entering your home. You can seal most of these areas with copper mesh and a caulk gun.
- ❸ **Remove food sources** – if the rodents have food to eat, it will be hard to get them out of your home. Follow these steps to remove their sources of food:
 - Store food in containers with tight lids
 - **Do not** leave *any* food out, including pet food
 - Wash dirty dishes right away
 - Clean up crumbs and spills quickly
 - Make an effort to eat in only one area of your home
 - Remove trash from your home everyday, or if this is not possible, store trash in a container with a tight lid.
- ❹ **Remove water sources** – a rodent can live a long time on water alone. Follow these steps to remove their sources of water:
 - Repair leaks
 - Clean up wet or damp areas
 - Hang dish rags and mops to dry
- ❺ **Clean home thoroughly** – focus on areas that are not cleaned often like under the stove, behind the refrigerator, around countertops and in cabinets where food may have fallen.
- ❻ **Reduce Clutter** – rodents like warm places to hide. By reducing clutter such as stacked newspapers, magazines and cardboard boxes, you remove their hiding places.
- ❼ **Use traps or apply pesticides** – if you tried all the above steps and have not seen a decrease in rodents, you should consider using traps or applying pesticides.
- ❽ **Cover** – your mattress, pillows, and box spring with special allergy-proof covers.
- ❾ **Continue** – to keep home clean. 1-2 weeks after applying pesticides or traps, clean entire home thoroughly to remove any remaining rodent allergen.

Special allergy-proof covers for you mattress, pillows, and box spring can be ordered from one of these companies:

- Allergy Clean Environments – 800-882-4110
- Allergy Control Products – 800-422-3878
- National Allergy Supply Inc. – 800-522-1448
- Mission Allergy – 877-662-5537
- Allergy & Asthma Technology Ltd. – 800-621-5545