

# House Mouse



The House Mouse (*Mus musculus*) is a small, slender rodent that has a slightly pointed nose; small, black, somewhat protruding eyes; large with sparsely haired ears; and a nearly hairless tail with obvious scale rings. House Mice are considered among the most troublesome and economically devastating rodents in the United States.

**Color:** Generally grayish brown with a gray or buff belly. Similar mice include White-Footed Mice, Jumping Mice and Harvest Mice.

House Mice live in and around homes, farms, commercial establishments, and in open fields. The onset of cold weather each fall in temperate regions may cause mice to move into structures in search of shelter and food.

**Food habits:** House mice eat many types of food but prefer seeds and grain. They are not hesitant to eat new foods and are considered "nibblers" sampling many kinds of items that may exist in their environment. Foods high in fat, protein or sugar may be preferred even when grain and seed are present.

**Damage:** House Mice cause structural damage to buildings by their gnawing and nest building activities. They may quickly cause extensive damage to insulation inside walls and attics. They usually contaminate foodstuffs with their urine, droppings, and hair.

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## Rodents!

### Prevent Rodent Infestations.

- Seal up all holes inside and out of the structure/dwelling to prevent rodents from entering.
- Trap rodents around the structure/dwelling to help reduce the population.
- Avoid illness. Take precautions when cleaning rodent-infested areas.

## Diseases can be transmitted by Rodents.

### Deer Mouse



The Deer Mouse (*Peromyscus maniculatus*) is a small, cute animal, with big round eyes and big ears. Its body is normally about 2 - 3 inches long with the tail being another 2 - 3 inches in length.

Color: You may see it in a variety of colors, from gray to reddish brown, depending on its age. The underbelly is always white and the tail has sharply defined white sides.

Diseases spread by the Deer Mouse, Cotton Rat, White-Footed Mouse and Rice Rat include Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome. These are just a few of the rodents that carry the type of Hantavirus which causes HPS in the United States.

### White-Footed Mouse



The White-Footed Mouse (*Peromyscus leucopus*) is hard to detect from the Deer Mouse. The head and body together are about 4 inches long. Its tail is normally shorter than its body.

Color: Fur ranges from pale brown to reddish brown, while its underside & feet are white.

It prefers wooded and brushy areas, although sometimes it will live in more open areas.

**Avoid close contact with rodents in general!**

## No Home or Business is safe with rats or mice around!

### Cotton Rat



The Cotton Rat (*Sigmodon hispidus*), which you'll find in the southeastern United States, has a bigger body than the deer mouse. Its body is about 5 - 7 inches and add another 3 - 4 inches for the tail. The hair is

longer and more coarse.

Color: Grayish brown color, even grayish black.

### Rice Rat



The Rice Rat (*Oryzomys palustris*) is slightly smaller than the cotton rat, having a body 5 - 6 inches long, plus a very long, 4 - 7 inch tail. Rice rats have short, soft fur.

Color: Grayish brown fur on top, and gray or tawny underbellies. Their feet are whitish.

As you might expect from the name, this rat likes marshy areas and is semi-aquatic.

### Causes of HPS -

The cause of hantavirus pulmonary syndrome is any number of hantaviruses, each with a preferred rodent carrier. The deer mouse is the primary carrier of the Sin Nombre virus, which is responsible for most cases of hantavirus pulmonary syndrome in North America. Other hantavirus carriers include the white-tailed mouse, cotton rat and rice rat.

Hantaviruses are transmitted to people primarily through the "aerosolization" of viruses shed in infected rodents' droppings, urine or saliva. Aerosolization occurs when a virus is kicked up into the air, making it easy to inhale. For example, a broom used to clean up mouse droppings in an attic may nudge into the air tiny particles of feces

## For More Information on HPS virus visit on line [MayoClinic.com](http://MayoClinic.com) Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome

containing hantaviruses, which are then easily inhaled.

After you inhale hantaviruses, they reach your lungs and begin to invade tiny blood vessels called capillaries, eventually causing them to leak. Your lungs then flood with fluid, which can trigger any of the respiratory problems associated with hantavirus pulmonary syndrome.

Although rare, there are other methods of hantavirus transmission. You can become infected after receiving a rodent bite or after eating food containing rodent excrement. The disease has not been shown to be transmitted from person to person.

In North America, the Roof rat, Norway rat and House Mouse are the big three troublemakers making their homes right beneath the feet and above the heads of millions of humans. They're trouble, not only because of the food they ruin and the mess they make. Worldwide, rats and mice spread more than 35 diseases, including hantavirus, leptospirosis, salmonellosis and plague on this continent. The rodents are formidable opponents, too: Rats have been known to chew through lead pipes to access water, and mice can squeeze through a hole the size of a dime.

### Roof Rat



The Roof Rat is a common long-tailed rodent. (*Rattus Rattus*)

Color: 3 subspecies have been named and these are generally identified by their fur color: (1) the black rat (*R. Rattus Rattus Linnaeus*) is black with a gray belly; (2)

the Alexandrine rat (*R. Rattus Alexandrinus Geoffroy*) has a brownish streaked with gray back and gray belly; and (3) the fruit rat (*R. Rattus Frugivorus Rafinesque*), is also, brownish streaked with gray back and white belly. The reliability of using coloration to identify the subspecies is questionable, and little significance can be attributed to subspecies differentiations. In some areas the subspecies aren't too distinct because more than one subspecies has probably been introduced and cross-breeding among them is a common occurrence.