

What are Cockroaches?

- An insect related to termites, although cockroaches do not eat wood
- Have been around more than 300 million years. There are fossils of cockroaches that look the same as modern cockroaches
- Over 3,500 species of cockroaches around the world
- Only a handful of species are able to live in proximity to people and are pests
- Some cockroaches like the German Cockroach have a social structure, and are able to recognize related cockroaches
- Because they reproduce quickly, cockroaches are used for scientific research, and have even been sent into space



Health Effects of Cockroaches

- Cockroaches live in unsanitary conditions
- They can carry bacteria on their legs and bodies
- When they walk across food or other surfaces they can contaminate it with bacteria
- Cockroaches shed their skins in a process called molting, which allows them to grow.
- Some people are allergic to these cast skins and cockroach excrement, leading to asthma like symptoms, rashes, watery eyes, nasal congestions, and sneezing



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Cockroaches



Cockroach Biology

- Can feed on almost anything, from food crumbs to toothpaste
- Cockroaches can use empty spaces in walls near plumbing and wiring to hide and move between rooms and housing units
- The female will lay an egg case (apothecia) and carry it with her until the eggs are ready to hatch
- A cockroach can lay up to 50 eggs at a time, and may lay eggs up to 8 times in her life
- Cockroaches have 3 life stages – egg, nymph and adult
- Cockroaches do not like to come out in the day, so if you see one, there are a lot more that are hiding



Life cycle of the American Cockroach (clockwise from bottom), egg case, nymph, adults

Species of Pest Cockroaches

German Cockroach



- Small, with 2 dark stripes. Unable to fly
- Live where there is high humidity and food nearby
- Live around refrigerators, bathrooms, leaky faucets, garbage areas

American Cockroach



- One of the fastest insects on earth
- In the summer, they are found in storm sewers, and move indoors in the winter. They are usually found in boiler rooms, basements, near steam pipes and near water sumps.

Oriental Cockroach



- Tend to feed on decaying organic matter
- Live in unsanitary spaces such as sewers, garbage disposals, indoor storage areas
- Due to their unsanitary living conditions, they contaminate more food than they eat.

How to Control and Manage Cockroaches

- Reduce sources of food, by regularly cleaning floors, and removing trash and garbage from the home.
- Reduce sources of water, by insulating pipes, and fixing leaky faucets and pipes.
- Eliminate hiding places for cockroaches by filling cracks, sealing pipes, and properly securing cabinets and refrigerators.
- The use of baited traps to kill cockroaches are effective
- Traps to monitor cockroach populations can be helpful
- Sprays can be effective in the short term to decrease cockroach populations, but are not a long term solution
- Devices which emit ultrasonic sounds are not effective.



An example of a cockroach bait