



Cockroaches



Why are cockroaches a pest?

Cockroaches are an ancient insect species that have always lived amongst humans. They are considered a public health hazard as they feed on virtually anything (omnivorous). This feeding behaviour can result in cockroaches feeding in drains and waste storage areas. Diseases can then be picked up and transferred onto food products and surfaces. Infestations are often the result of broken drains or building defects. Cockroaches can even be transferred between locations, for example by eggs or adults being within products purchased from infested shops. They carry bacteria which can be responsible for gastroenteritis, dysentery and typhoid. They can also pick up and transmit pathogens. In extreme cases cockroaches can also cause allergic reactions for some people, including asthmatics. There are two species that are commonly found in our environment, the German Cockroach and the Oriental Cockroach. Each is as common but will live and breed in slightly different ways and environments.

Signs of cockroaches

All cockroaches are nocturnal and will hide during the daytime. However, if an infestation is large enough you may be able to see the insects at anytime during the day. If you suspect you have an infestation, watch for insects scuttling away to hide when you enter at night. Also you can use a torch to check behind units, refrigerators and cookers to look for cockroaches. Also look for faecal matter and redundant egg cases.

German Cockroaches

- German cockroaches are dark brown to black and have two dark brown stripes. They are approximately 1.7cm long with a tapering abdomen
- Each female will produce 4 to 8 egg capsules in her lifetime and each capsule will contain 30 to 40 eggs

- Infestations will be found in areas of high humidity and near food e.g. in kitchens behind fridges, skirting boards, around cookers and in cupboards
- Untidy and unclean living conditions will attract cockroaches
- In large infestations there can be a sweet smell

Oriental Cockroaches

- Oriental cockroaches are a very dark brown or shiny black and are approximately 2.5cm long
- Each female will produce an average of 8 egg capsules and each will contain 16 eggs
- Oriental cockroaches prefer spaces where they can crawl around like basements, cellars, drains and other moist areas
- They can tolerate lower temperatures than German cockroaches so they can be found in drains, bins and waste areas

How to prevent an infestation

Good housekeeping and hygiene should help prevent or control a cockroach infestation. However the following suggestions may also help:

- Keep all open food stuffs in tightly sealed containers
- Keep surfaces, food preparation areas and floors as clean as possible
- Clean kitchen areas intensively, focusing on areas where grease accumulates
- Clear up after every meal and do not leave food lying around, especially overnight
- Remove rubbish regularly from inside. Rubbish should be stored in sealed bins (i.e. wheelie bins) and kept away from the building
- Ensure any indoor drain access is sealed. The edges of lids should be greased to ensure they are completely sealed

Control

If you find that you have Cockroaches in your home contact the Environmental Health Department on 01442 228543/ 228455 or email pestcontrol@dacorum.gov.uk