

What can I do to avoid problems with ants and roaches?

Like all living things, ants and roaches need access to food, water and shelter to survive. By eliminating these necessities you can get *long-term* control and avoid the need to repeatedly apply pesticides, which generally provide only short-term results. Here are a few specific suggestions:

1. Don't let ants and roaches into to your home, and don't give them hiding places within your home.

Use physical barriers to stop them:

- ☞ Install and maintain screen windows and doors.
- ☞ Install a tight fitting door-sweep on exterior doors.
- ☞ Use caulking to fill cracks and crevices in floors and walls.
- ☞ Be especially careful to seal spaces around kitchen counters and cabinets.
- ☞ Look under sinks and around radiators for places where pipes pass through walls and floors and make sure spaces around the pipes are sealed.
- ☞ Close off these passageways using screening, steel wool, fiberglass insulation, plaster and caulking, and similar materials.

Within your home, insects will seek sheltered places to hide. Caulking cracks and crevices will eliminate many hiding places. Get rid of others by cleaning up clutter – old newspapers and magazines, bags and boxes, even clothes left on the floor. All provide good hiding places for insect pests.

2. Eliminate sources of food and water.

Good sanitation is the key.

- ☞ Keep all food in tightly sealed packages or containers.
- ☞ Clean up all spills and crumbs. Keep work surfaces and floors clean and dry.
- ☞ Pay special attention to places in the kitchen that may not get cleaned regularly – a thorough cleaning in and around the stove, sink and refrigerator may eliminate many bug problems.
- ☞ Make sure all food storage shelves and cabinets are kept clean.
- ☞ Don't forget that pet food or late night snacks left out overnight can provide a feast for insects; these foods should be properly covered and stored.
- ☞ Repair all water leaks from faucets, pipes, radiators, or any other sources.
- ☞ As you rid your house of pests, be sure to clean up any of their remains – dead insects and their droppings – these may serve to attract others if not removed.

3. Use non-chemical methods to get rid of ants and roaches that may already be in your home.

Sticky traps are available to trap insects. Place them along walls and near potential sources of food and water. Not only will they trap insects, they also can give you clues as to how the pests are entering your home and where they are going.

A fly swatter works well on individual insects that you can see. Even a vacuum cleaner can be an effective tool to catch insects in cracks, crevices and other hard to reach places. If you do get them, be sure to discard or empty the dust bag or compartment to prevent the pests from escaping later.

4. If all else fails, use pesticides *very* carefully.

Pesticides should be used only as a last resort after other control methods have been tried. If you decide that you must use chemical controls, choose products that present the least health risk to your family and pets.

- ☞ Products that enclose the poison in bait stations or traps and products that are applied into inaccessible cracks and crevices will help reduce the chances of exposing curious children and pets to poisons.
- ☞ Avoid the use of foggers, “bug bombs” and sprays – you can't control where the chemicals go.
- ☞ Try to choose products with the lowest toxicity; some of the sources of information listed in this pamphlet may be helpful in choosing specific active ingredients to use. Pesticides with “boric acid,” “pyrethrins” and “pyrethroids” – look on the label to see if they are listed – are generally less toxic if used according to label instructions, but even those products may cause problems.
- ☞ Be sure to select a product specifically designed for the pest you are trying to control - using the wrong product may result in risks to your health without any benefit.

If you do decide to use a pesticide: ***Read all label warnings before you buy any pesticide. Follow all label directions about use, storage and disposal!***

Remember that some important information is not found on the labels. The long-term health effects of active ingredients are not included, nor is the identity of so-called “inert” ingredients which may also be toxic chemicals. Many of the chemicals in pesticides may cause cancer, nervous system disorders and other health problems.

Sources of Additional Information

Beyond Pesticides provides free Alternative Fact Sheets with suggestions for the prevention and control of ants, roaches and other pests. <http://www.beyondpesticides.org> or 202-543-5450.

Northwest Coalition for Alternative Pesticides also offers free Alternative Fact Sheets, which describe control methods for ants and roaches. <http://www.pesticide.org/default.htm> or 541-344-5044.

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation offers "IPM In And Around Your House" which contains information on why pests need to be controlled, and less toxic pest control methods. This and other free pamphlets can be ordered at (518) 402-8781 or downloaded at <http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dshm/pesticid/brochure.htm>.

The New York State IPM (Integrated Pest Management) Program is associated with Cornell Cooperation Extension, and offers "Found a cockroach? Don't Panic." which includes suggestions on roach control. <http://www.nysipm.cornell.edu> or (800)635-8356.

Common Sense Pest Control, by Wm. Olkowski, Sheila Daar, and Helga Olkowski. 1991. Newton: The Taunton Press. This valuable reference book describes less toxic methods to control a variety of pests, including ants and roaches. Check your library for a copy.

New York State Attorney General's Office provides "Integrated Pest Management – An Introduction" and various reports on pesticides and pest management at <http://www.ag.ny.gov/environment/ipm3fold.html>, or call 212-416-8446 / 518- 486-4550.

Dear New Yorker:

For too many New Yorkers, insect pests like ants and roaches are a part of daily life. They are unsightly and unhealthy. They can ruin our food. For many of these same families, the health risks associated with the use of pesticides have also become a part of daily life. It doesn't have to be this way. Ants, roaches and other insects can be eliminated from our homes without resorting to the use of poisons.

The methods we can use to accomplish this are simple and based on common sense – treat the insects as pests, not pets! Don't provide food, water and shelter to bugs that invade your home.

In this brochure we suggest actions that you can use in your home. By keeping insects out and ensuring that they don't get food, water and hiding places, you can protect your family's health and well-being from both the health risks associated with such pests and the risks of using poisons. There are many other sources of information on pest control methods, which are available to you for free.

As part of my office's efforts to protect the public from the dangers of pesticides, I am happy to provide you with this information on pest control methods that help to minimize the use of dangerous chemicals.

Sincerely,

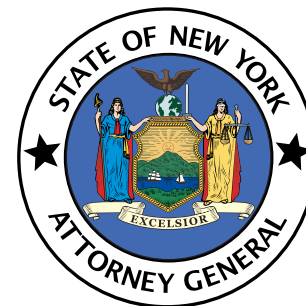


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Bug Problems?

How to Control Roaches and Ants And Reduce the Use of Poisons



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Environmental Protection Bureau

Social Justice Division

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