



# SAFE PEST CONTROL

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development • Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control

*"For years, cockroaches have defeated our best efforts to get rid of them. We sprayed and sprayed, but they always came back. Now we understand there are better methods and products that really work"*

Environmental Health Watch

## Did you know...?

- Many pesticides for home use are toxic?
- There are alternative pest management methods that limit the use of toxic substances?
- Mice, cockroaches, and cockroach "dust" can trigger asthma attack?

## What is it?

Integrated pest management (IPM) is a way to remove pests, like cockroaches, mice, and rats from a home. IPM is a common sense approach that:

- Denies pests food, water, shelter and a way to enter the home.
- Uses baits and powders, such as gel baits, traps and borate powder.

## Why use IPM?

- IPM is safer. IPM does not use as many harmful pesticides as traditional pest control.
  - Avoiding pesticides is especially important in homes. Pesticides can contain long lasting, toxic chemicals or lung irritants that cause asthma attacks. Children are among those most vulnerable to exposure. IPM strategies apply pesticides only as needed and use the least hazardous pesticides to control pests.

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## Non-toxic traps can be part of an IPM strategy.



Photo by: January E. Jones, *Improving Kids' Environment*

- IPM works better. IPM is better at keeping the roaches and other pests away for long periods of time compared to spraying of pesticides or other poisons. IPM works by addressing the cause of the problem and taking a long-term approach to reducing pests. Using pesticides can cause pests to build up a resistance to the poison so that the chemicals do not work as well over time, and do not stop the pests from coming back to your home.

## What you can do

**Look.** Pay attention to where there are pests in your home, how they enter, and how many there are. By watching and tracking pests in your home, you can better decide what actions to take.

**Keep a clean home.** Keeping a clean house is the best way to keep pests out. Some important things to pay attention to are:

- Clean-up food and drink spills right away.
- Remove clutter (such as cardboard boxes or paper) so pests have fewer places to hide.
- Put food in tightly sealed containers, such as plastic with tight lids. Do not leave open containers of food on counters or in cabinets. Put pet food dishes away overnight.
- Keep trash in a closed container and take it out frequently—every day if possible. Don't let trash pile up outside.
- Fix plumbing or other water leaks. Pests need water sources to survive.
- Seal cracks and holes. Use a caulk gun to seal cracks around baseboards, shelves, pipes, sinks, and bathroom fixtures.

**Use roach baits properly and only if necessary. Place baits out of the reach of children and pets.**

- Put the bait close to the pests' hiding places. It must be closer than other sources of food.
- Good spots for baits are next to walls, baseboards, under sinks, in cabinets and near plumbing fixtures. Place baits in areas of roach activity.
- Do not spray any pesticides. This will keep the pests away from the baits.

**If needed, call a pest control professional who uses IPM practices.** If you have taken all the steps described above and still have a pest problem, you may need a professional to help.

- If you live in an apartment or rent a home, speak to your landlord or property manager about using an IPM professional. Talk to other tenants about the importance of IPM for long-term solutions to your building's pest problems.
- IPM professionals utilize various methods to identify, monitor, and solve the pest problem without using lots of pesticides.

### For more information...

Visit HUD's website at [www.hud.gov/offices/lead](http://www.hud.gov/offices/lead) for more information about addressing health hazards in homes or to learn if HUD has a Healthy Homes program in your community. From this website, you can download a copy of "Help Yourself to A Healthy Home" for more practical steps you can take to make your home a healthy home.

### Other Federal Resources

**US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

[www.cdc.gov/od/oc/childhealth](http://www.cdc.gov/od/oc/childhealth)

**US Environmental Protection Agency**

[www.epa.gov/children](http://www.epa.gov/children)

### Other Resources

Environmental Health Watch has several resources on IPM and cockroach control [www.ehw.org](http://www.ehw.org)

Children's Environmental Health Coalition's HealthHouse also has several resources on using IPM in the home [www.checnet.org/healthhouse/](http://www.checnet.org/healthhouse/)

**Place baits near baseboards, out of reach from children.**



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