



- 1. MYTH:** Rodents can get as big as cats.
FACT: A typical house mouse doesn't exceed 2" in length or one ounce in weight. However, even on the larger end, even adult Norway rats don't typically exceed half a pound; a big rat has a body about 8 inches long, with a tail nearly as long. That's far smaller than the average cat. The fear many people have of rodents, combined with quick nighttime settings, often results in exaggerated stories.
- 2. MYTH:** Rodents can live a long time.
FACT: Mice in the wild do not normally live much more than a year. In fact, the average mouse lives six to twelve months. Disease, predators, competition and poor weather cut many rodent lives short.
- 3. MYTH:** Rats and mice don't have bones, so they can get through tiny holes.
FACT: Rats and mice have internal skeletons like other mammals. Holes of only an eighth of an inch in size will allow rats and mice to gnaw an opening large enough for them to pass through.
- 4. MYTH:** There is one mouse per person living in a city.
FACT: Next to humans, mice are regarded as the most common mammal in most cities. However, populations rise and fall according to factors like weather, food supplies, shelter and control efforts – not the number of people. There are many mice living in cities, but their distribution is uneven.
- 5. MYTH:** Only people who live in run-down buildings in poor neighborhoods get rodents.
FACT: Anyone can find themselves with a rat or a mouse problem – even in the most affluent neighborhoods. Rodents seek available food and shelter wherever it can be found – regardless of economics.
- 6. MYTH:** If you see rats or mice in the daytime, there is a large population around.
FACT: Although primarily nocturnal, rats and mice may move about at any time of the day or night. They are more visible during the daytime because it is easier for people to see them. Sightings usually are not a good indicator of how many rats or mice are living nearby.
- 7. MYTH:** Cheese is a favorite food of rats and mice and is the best bait for traps.
FACT: Mice and rats don't seek cheese more than other foods. Cheese historically was a common bait because it was readily available and easy to fasten to a trap. Today, depending on the species of rodent present, people commonly use peanut butter, bacon, chocolate or fruit.
- 8. MYTH:** Rats and mice are not aggressive and will not bite or attack people.
FACT: When cornered, rats can charge or leap at a person, and when handled, wild rats and mice will squeal and bite. Their bite can easily penetrate flesh and cause puncture wounds. Rats also bite sleeping people, especially children, when food odor is present.
- 9. MYTH:** Rats carried diseases (like the Plague) in the Middle Ages, but today they don't.
FACT: In the U.S. today, the Norway rat has been incriminated in transmitting dozens of different diseases to people, including salmonella, leptospirosis and trichinosis and rat-bite fever.
- 10. MYTH:** Having cats will control rodents.
FACT: Not all cats are good "mousers," and few cats will challenge a rat. Although some cats hunt for mice, many cats tolerate rats or mice, especially when they are well-fed. It could be said that more rats and mice have been fed by cat food than killed by a cat.

Source: Dr. Bruce Colvin and Mr. Dale Kaukeinen

