

## **COCKROACHES - Pest Control Advice**

### **Description**

Cockroaches are large winged insects ranging from 12 – 30 mm in length with long antennae. The most commonly found species in the U.K. are the oriental cockroach – dark brown/black in colour and 17-30mm, and the German cockroach - lighter brown and smaller 12-15mm. Cockroaches are pests of warm indoor environments frequently associated with restaurants, hotels, hospitals and flats. Outdoors they may be found around drains, dustbins and on refuse tips. They are nocturnal insects and need a supply of foods with high water content.

The female cockroach produces up to 8 purse-like egg cases at monthly intervals. Each purse contains 16-30 nymphs (small transparent young insects). It takes around 4 months for these to grow to maturity. The German cockroach carries the egg capsule until the young are ready to hatch in 2-4 weeks. The oriental cockroach deposits its egg case in dark a sheltered place. After 2 months, it splits open and the nymphs emerge. It takes 10 months to 2 years depending on temperature and food availability for them to reach maturity.

Cockroaches are potential carriers of germs causing diseases in humans e.g. dysentery and gastro-enteritis. They feed on faecal matter and rotting waste materials. Contamination occurs when they come into contact with food preparation areas, cutlery, crockery and food.

### **Prevention**

Ensure that your home is clean and food stored in pest-proof containers. It is common for dried food such as rice to become infected during storage so be aware of this when shopping and buy only from clean shops.

All cracks crevices and other building defects that could provide a dark enclosure for cockroaches in your home should be filled in and repaired. Pipework should if possible be boxed in or proofed as these areas provide an excellent hiding environment.

### **Control Measures**

You will probably need professional help getting rid of cockroaches. You should establish whether your neighbours also have a problem, as treating one property in isolation is rarely effective – adjoining properties need to be treated at the same time. It is important to take immediate action when you see a cockroach as they can quickly spread to your neighbours.

To treat an infestation it is usual for an insecticide to be used around the boundary of rooms, at floor/wall junctions, in vents and ducts and behind equipment. The treated areas should be left undisturbed for as long as possible. Follow up treatments will probably be needed to destroy any new nymphs as they emerge from their eggs. The Council's Environmental Services Division offers a treatment service for residents in the Crawley area (please telephone 01293 438000 for an appointment).