

Roaches, mice and bed bugs

Moderate · 2 hours, then weekly checks · \$10 to \$30 for traps and caulk

Tell your landlord in writing the day you see signs. Then cut off food, water and hiding spots, seal small gaps, and use traps or baits instead of sprays. Bed bugs need a professional and your landlord's help.

YOU'LL NEED

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| ☐ Your phone, for photos | ☐ Snap traps (mice) and sticky traps or baits (roaches) |
| ☐ Airtight food containers | |
| ☐ Steel wool and caulk | ☐ A vacuum and sealable trash bags |

WHAT TO KNOW

- 1 **Tell your landlord in writing, with photos.** Many leases and states put pest control on the landlord. In New York, an insect infestation can breach the landlord's duty to keep the home livable. For bed bugs, notify your landlord. Landlords may have to take part in treatment.
- 2 **Cut off food and water.** Keep food in thick plastic, metal or glass containers with tight lids, clean spills right away, and don't leave pet food or water out overnight. Cockroaches can't survive and reproduce without food and water, so fix leaky faucets too.
- 3 **Mice: seal the gaps.** A mouse can fit through a hole the width of a pencil, about 1/4 inch. Fill small holes with steel wool and caulk around it. Check under sinks, behind appliances and around pipes.
- 4 **Mice: trap them.** Snap traps work. Put them along walls where you see droppings.
- 5 **Roaches: sticky traps tight against walls, in cupboards and around the fridge, stove and sink show you where they are.** Baits come in child-resistant containers. For sprays and other pesticides, it's best to hire a pest professional.
- 6 **Bed bugs: check mattress seams and the bed frame.** Wash bedding and clothes, and run them in a dryer on high heat. Cut clutter and vacuum, then empty the vacuum into a sealed bag outside. Expect a professional treatment.

Watch out Don't sweep or vacuum mouse droppings. That can stir up germs. Wet them with disinfectant first, then wipe up with paper towels while wearing gloves. And never try to cook bed bugs out with a space heater or by cranking the thermostat. It doesn't work and it's dangerous.

DAD NOTE Write to the landlord the first day you see one. Pests are easier and cheaper to fix early, and you want the paper trail.

Full lesson: aptkeys.com/your-place/when-something-goes-wrong/roaches-mice-and-bed-bugs/

Checked October 3, 2026. Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; University of Minnesota Extension; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; New York State Attorney General; California Department of Real Estate.