

Pests Can Be Controlled ... Safely

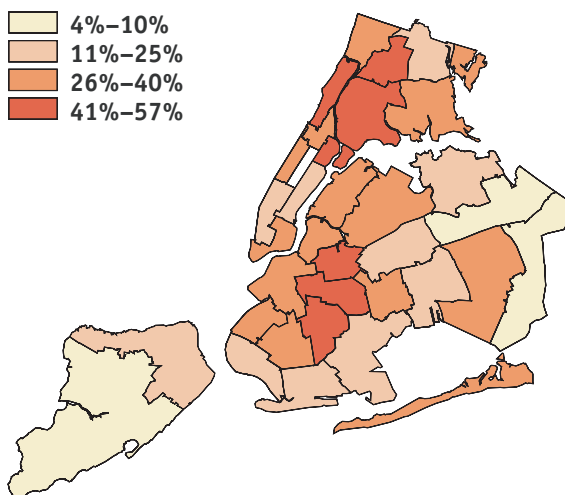
Many Yorkers live with or near cockroaches, rodents, and other pests. Insects and rodents in the home contribute to illness and reduce the quality of life. For example, people with asthma who live in infested homes are more likely to have an asthma attack. And, many people with pests in their homes overuse hazardous pesticides that can cause poisonings and other health problems.

Some pesticides that are illegal for sale in New York City are still used in the homes of many New Yorkers trying to eradicate pests. Each year, about 1,000 people report accidental hazardous exposures to pest control products, and the long-term effects of being regularly exposed to many commonly used products have not been studied. No one should have to live in homes infested with pests. Fortunately, pests can be controlled safely.

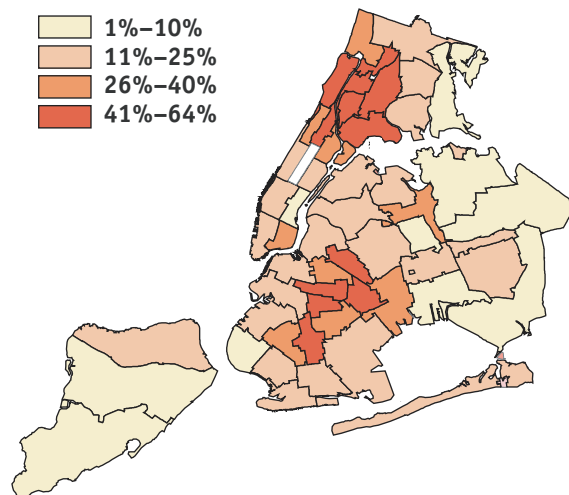
Too many New Yorkers live with cockroaches and rodents

- Adults in nearly 30% of households (880,000 households) report having cockroaches in their home, and nearly 25% (680,000 households) report seeing mice or rats, or signs of mice or rats, in their home or residential building.
- Cockroach and rodent infestations are most common in Northern Manhattan, Southern and Central Bronx, and Central Brooklyn.

Percent households with cockroaches



Percent households seeing rodents

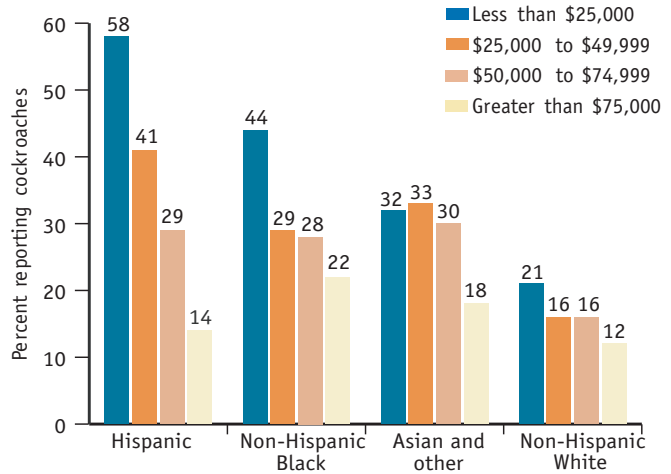


Note: This report is based on the 2003 New York City Community Health Survey, in which adults age 18 and older representing every neighborhood in New York City were interviewed by telephone about their health and the health of their families. For full survey details, see: nyc.gov/health/survey. Other data sources include the 2002 New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey, NYC Poison Control Center calls, and the New York State Department of Health Statewide Planning and Research Cooperative System (SPARCS).

Infestation is far more common in low-income communities

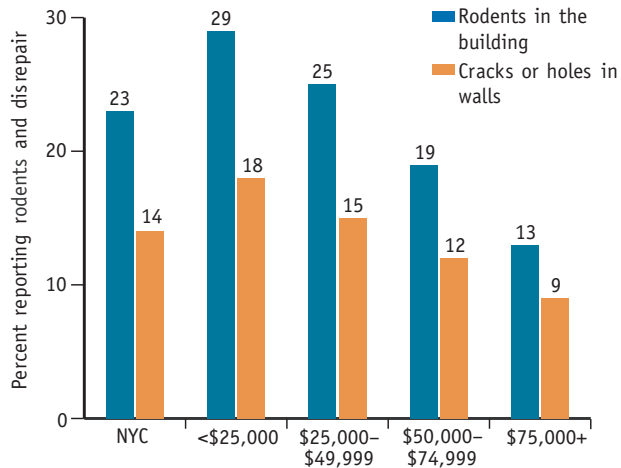
Cockroaches are far more common in low-income households than higher-income ones. This disparity is greatest among Hispanic households, where those with the lowest-income homes are 4 times as likely to have cockroaches as those with the highest income.

Percent of households in NYC reporting cockroaches, by race/ethnicity and household income



Rodents and housing disrepair are also far more common in low-income households. Disrepair, such as having cracks and holes in walls, contributes to infestation by providing shelter for cockroaches and rodents.

Percent of households in NYC reporting rodents and housing disrepair, by household income



People with asthma who have cockroaches and rodents in their homes report more frequent and severe asthma symptoms.

- People with cockroaches in their homes are 1.5 times more likely to have asthma.
- Households with rodents are 2 times more likely to have a person with asthma.
- Households in disrepair are nearly 2 times more likely to have a person with asthma.

Asthma, infestation and disrepair

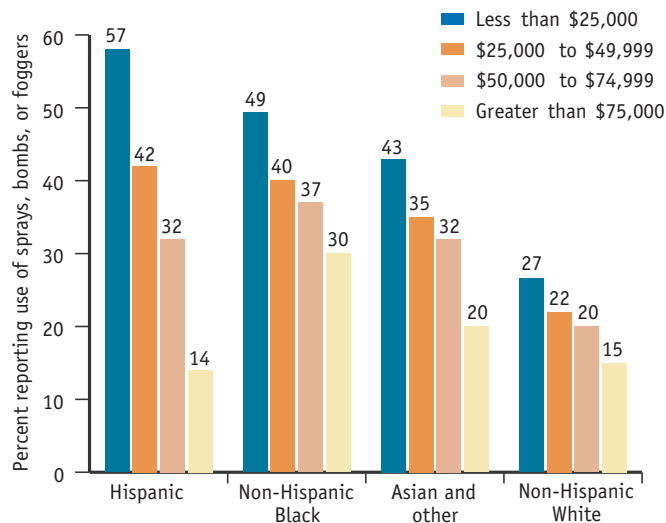
	% reporting recent symptoms of asthma
Cockroaches in household	
Yes	6.2
No	4.0
Rodents in building	
Yes	12.5
No	6.0
Cracks or holes in walls of apartment	
Yes	12.9
No	6.6

Many New Yorkers use hazardous products to control cockroaches

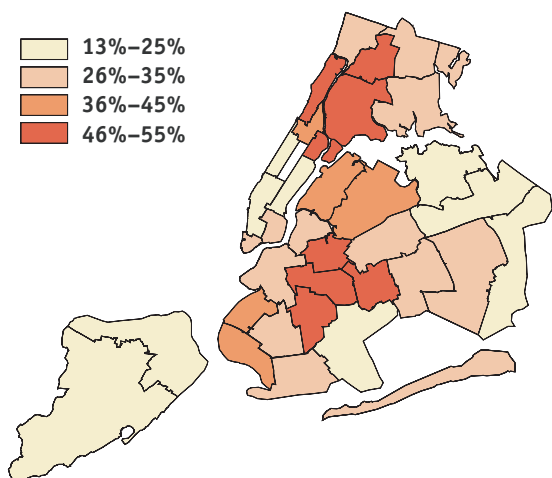
Many people use pesticides—chemicals that kill insects and rodents—to control pests. Because sprays, bombs and foggers can easily contaminate cooking, eating, and other surfaces, they are especially likely to expose people to harmful chemicals.

- One third of all households, and 63% of households with cockroaches, use insecticidal sprays, bombs, or foggers.
- Low-income families generally, and low-income Hispanic families in particular, are most likely to use sprays, bombs and foggers: 57% of low-income Hispanic families use these products compared to only 14% of high-income Hispanic families.
- Pesticide use is most common in areas where cockroach and rodent infestation is high—Northern Manhattan, Southern and Central Bronx, and Central Brooklyn.

Percent of households in NYC that use sprays, bombs or foggers, by race/ethnicity and household income



Percent of households that use sprays, bombs, or foggers



- Some families buy hazardous pesticides that are not legal for use. Of households with cockroaches, 9% use Tempo®, a product that is illegal to sell for personal use in New York. Its use is even more common in infested Hispanic homes, where nearly 15% report using it. Tempo is sold as a white powder and contains a product called cyfluthrin. It should never be handled or used by non-professionals. Other commonly available illegal and hazardous pesticides are “Miracle Chalk” or “Chinese Chalk” for cockroaches, and “Tres Pasitos” for mice.
- Household pesticides put many children at risk. In 2003, nearly 1,000 people reported accidental pesticide exposures or poisonings to the NYC Poison Control Center. Half of the reported exposures were among children under five years of age, and 95% of all exposures occurred in the home. The same year, 42 people were hospitalized for accidental pesticide related exposures.


Recommendations

✓ Cockroaches and rodents can be controlled effectively and safely

New York City housing and health codes require that landlords maintain apartments free from pests. Pesticides should never be used as the sole means of managing pests. Non-chemical methods of pest control are often more effective—and safer—than using pesticides. Landlords and families can take simple steps to reduce infestations and the use of pesticides, such as:

- Fix leaks and dripping faucets quickly. Keep sinks dry overnight.
- Use caulk and plaster to seal holes and cracks in kitchen and bathroom walls, floors, ceilings, and cabinets.
- Store food in sealed containers, and do not leave food, pet food, or garbage out.
- Reduce clutter and piling of newspapers and cardboard.
- Remove garbage daily from apartments, and put garbage on the curb as close to pickup time as possible.
- Use only safer pest control products such as boric acid, gels, and baits for cockroaches, and glue traps or bait in enclosed tamper-proof containers for rodents. Avoid foggers, bombs, and sprays that spread chemicals throughout the home.
- If you have Tempo, Tres Pasitos, Cockroach Chalk, or any other pesticide that is improperly labeled, seal it in a plastic bag and discard it in a container away from children and pets.


For more information on safer pest control, visit <http://www.nyc.gov/health>.



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A report from the New York City Community Health Survey

NYC Vital Signs



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