Pest and Pathogen Cleanouts

Wildlife, insects, and pests harbor and spread hundreds of pathogens and microorganisms, including bacteria, viruses, fungi, and mold. Such vector pests include mice, rats, and other wildlife, as well as cockroaches, flies, and other insects. Rodents and cockroaches are also recognized as significant contributors to allergies and severe cases of asthma when people are exposed to high levels of allergens. Simply eradicating these pests does not eliminate the threat of pathogens left behind on surfaces, contaminated food, nesting materials, and other areas they travel. The threat continues until thorough cleaning, disinfecting, sanitizing, and proper disposal are completed.

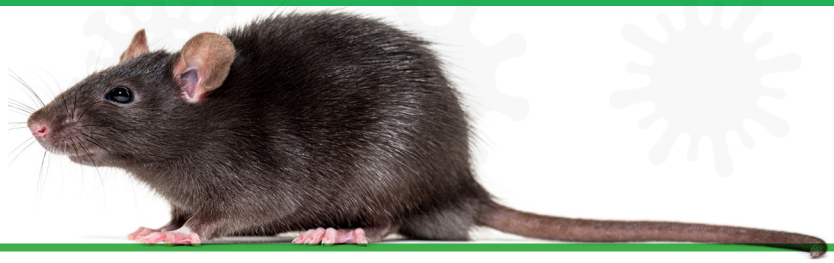
Severe infestations may take several applications or control methods over weeks and even months to eliminate. During this time, the threat of pathogen spread continues as these urban vectors attempt to evade capture, continue to reproduce, and contaminate new areas. This cycle makes disinfecting and sanitizing critical, especially in high-risk and highly vulnerable areas like kitchens, food facilities, daycare facilities, schools, and elder care and healthcare facilities. By combining effective pest management with regular disinfecting practices during active control efforts and after the pests have been eliminated, you can help defend public health by reducing the risk of disease transmission and other health conditions. **Not only will you be able to help provide your customers with a valuable service, but you can do so with minimal investment. New revenue streams such as pathogen and pest cleanouts can bring in additional customers while helping to maintain existing accounts.**

Because of pests' proximity to humans, the risks of contact with pathogens may be increased.

ELIMINATE THE THREAT WHILE YOU ELIMINATE THE VECTOR

During services for active infestations, applying disinfectants or sanitizers to areas that harbor harmful pathogens can reduce the risk of disease transmission. Using the biology of the pest as a guide, treat any identified harborage areas, alongside any sources of contamination and microorganisms such as drains, garbage disposals, toilets, trash receptacles, dumpsters, and other surfaces. For rodents, apply in additional areas where droppings, urine, nesting materials, oil or grease marks, and other signs of activity are visible.

After service, carcasses, fecal remains, urine, and infested nest materials and goods are often left to the client to remedy. Without using appropriate PPE, proper tools, and correct procedures, their well-intentioned actions may add additional risk to the public. Vacuuming without a HEPA filter, incorrectly disposing of contaminated materials, sweeping, and disturbing previously infested areas all create airborne particles that may enter living spaces, ventilation units, or other houses or units nearby.



JUST THE FACTS

RODENTS: Rodents can transmit diseases in many ways. Direct transmission occurs through handling rodents, bites, and contact with infected urine, feces, saliva, or other bodily fluids. Indirect transmission may also occur through breathing contaminated air, consuming contaminated food or water, or through pets that have encountered contaminated sources such as food, water, feces, and urine, etc. They also spread pathogens and diseases through the ectoparasites they may carry such as fleas, mites, lice, and ticks.

FLIES: Most flies breed and feed in unsanitary conditions and their larvae develop on decaying organic matter, feces, garbage, and other potential sources of pathogens. Larvae pupate in or in proximity to these same areas. As adults emerge, they quickly become contaminated with disease-causing agents through feeding, mating, and finding additional sources to deposit their own eggs.

COCKROACHES: Cockroaches primarily spread disease mechanically through contamination of food and food handling surfaces. They often pick up pathogens from drains, sewers, garbage, infected food items, and decaying matter.

KEY SERVICE ELEMENTS TO CONSIDER

Under the right conditions, many pathogens can survive and remain infectious for hours, days, and even months after the organisms that transmitted them have been eliminated. **In addition to eliminating the pest, here's a few factors that can help protect against the pathogens that vector pests introduce to their environments.**

- Apply disinfectants or sanitizers to kill and reduce the number of pathogens on human contact surfaces and to reduce pathogens that become airborne due to disturbing fecal material, urine, and other sources left by pests.
- Remove dead cockroaches to reduce allergens and reduce the risk of live cockroaches interacting with dead cockroaches loaded with pathogens.
- Reduce the transfer of microbes from affected drains, toilets, sinks, trash receptacles and dumpsters, and other surfaces to food items, food prep areas, or human contact areas.
- Remove infested materials such as animal nesting materials or soiled insulation, food, and other items pests have been in contact with.
- Eliminate parasites such as fleas, ticks, and mites that may be present in the physical environment.
- Disinfect rodent traps and bait stations to prevent harborage of infectious disease or spread from one location to another.

Products like DSV™ are critcal to decontaminating hard surfaces while a product like Steri-fab® is ideal for soft surfaces.

THE COMPLETE CLEANOUT

The primary goal of any cleanout service should be to provide a crucial service to customers and to protect the health of the PMP performing these services. Be sure to select the most appropriate PPE for any treatments and to minimize your exposure to pathogens and allergens.

1. First, locate any dead organisms, clean the immediate area, and safely discard any carcasses, loose fecal material, nesting materials, and/or soiled soft surfaces that can be removed.

    1a. Thoroughly wet the area with a disinfecting product like DSV or Steri-fab to reduce pathogens and airborne particles that may be stirred up by moving around, vacuuming, or moving carcasses. Ensure that all materials that have been sprayed stay wet for at least 10 minutes or for the length of time indicated by their label.

    1b. Remove and double bag all carcasses and impacted materials. Continue to apply a sanitizer like DSV or Steri-fab if any stains, urine, feces, or other bodily fluids are visible.

    1c. Thoroughly apply disinfectant to any areas where urine, waste, carcasses, blood, grease marks, oils, saliva, or other bodily fluids are/were present.

2. Examine areas closely for ectoparasites like fleas, lice, or mites. If ectoparasites are present, a dual-purpose product like Steri-fab can be used to both disinfect surfaces and kill these secondary pests.

3. Apply selected disinfectant to human contact areas and potential activity areas or pathways. This application should include areas throughout the house where organisms could potentially transfer pathogens and areas where airborne pathogens may have settled.

4. Ventilate all areas treated with disinfectant for the appropriate time as indicated by product label.

5. After all dead organisms and infested materials have been bagged and secured, disinfect reusable gloves, boots, and other protective equipment. Disinfectants can also be applied to the exterior of bags that may contain contaminants or pathogens.

6. Repeat these steps if any additional organisms are found.

NOTE: Many microorganisms have mechanisms to survive longer periods or may be picked up by other pests or people. Repeat disinfection or sanitation applications weekly, biweekly, or as appropriate to the severity and duration of the infestation.