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Winterize Your Home from Vector Infestations

It is important for the health of your family and pets to maintain a vector-free living environment. A vector is any animal that can transmit disease to humans. Examples of vectors are mosquitoes, rodents, fleas and ticks. If infected, these vectors can transmit Hantavirus, Plague, West Nile Virus, or Lyme disease to humans and other animals.



During the wintertime, vectors climb, claw and gnaw to find an entry way into your home. This can cause structural damage to roofs, siding, and basements. Rats and squirrels seek warmer climates for building nests. Rodents work at night to gather food and often gnaw on electrical wires, possibly causing home fires.

Signs of vector infestations often go unnoticed until it's too late. Below are some simple tips for preventing vector infestations in your home.

Rodent Control Maintenance

Maintaining your yard plays a large role in keeping your home vector-free. Be sure to trim shrubs, bushes and trees near your house to prevent rodents from climbing the branches and reaching your roof. Squirrels and rats like to gnaw at roof overhangs, shingles, gables, and sections where two roofs meet. Squirrels can even get into the attic through crevices in the chimney.



Outdoor Rodent Control Tips:

- Keep your branches and bushes trimmed back away from the house
- Fruit that has fallen from fruit trees should be cleared from the yard
- Check for leaking outdoor faucets and pipes
- Don't leave pet water bowls or food bowls outside
- Always keep doors closed – rodents are quick!
- Store firewood away from the home
- Empty garbage cans and keep lids closed

Indoor Rodent Control Tips:

- Seal all entryways, cracks, and holes in siding, doors, window screens, and areas around pipes
- Practice good sanitation by cleaning up crumbs and spills
- Never leave glasses of water or pet food/water bowls out at night
- Store dry food in sealed containers
- Clean under counter-top appliances and large kitchen appliances

For more information, please contact us at 800-442-2283 or visit our website at www.sbcounty.gov/dehs.

Health Concerns about Misuse of Pesticides for Bed Bug Control

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued a health advisory about misuse of pesticides to treat infestations of bed bugs and other insects. The advisory states that "some pesticides are being applied indoors even though they are approved only for outdoor use. Even pesticides that are approved for indoor use can cause harm if over-applied or not used as instructed on the product label."



Harmful health effects that may result from improper use of pesticides include neurological impairment (headaches, dizziness, nausea, visual disturbances, numbness in the face and limbs, muscle tremors, etc.), abdominal pain, and cardiopulmonary issues (chest tightness, heart palpitations, and chest pain).

Please see the CDC's full advisory message at <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/HAN/han00336.asp> for more information about this public health problem.

New Social Media Sites Launched



DEHS has launched Facebook and Twitter pages en Español! All of the content posted on the English-language social media sites will now be posted in Spanish too. The link for our Facebook page in Spanish is www.facebook.com/sbehsEsp. The link for our Twitter page in Spanish is <https://twitter.com/sbehsEsp>.

DEHS also recently created two YouTube channels. The link for our English-language channel is www.youtube.com/user/sbcdehs and the link for our Spanish-language channel is www.youtube.com/user/sbcdehsesp. Check out our new playlist called "Vector Control Videos" on our English-language channel.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Amanda Gaspard, Health Education Specialist, at 800-442-2283 or Amanda.Gaspard@dph.sbcounty.gov.

