

# Rats

## **Aren't there more rats in the city, with all the garbage and subways?**

No, there may be just as many rats in the suburbs. It is just easier to see them in the city because there are fewer places to hide. Rats like our yards with places to hide, places to build their burrows, and a lot of food.

## **Are rats good swimmers? Can they get inside through our sewers?**

Rats can swim well and can swim a half-mile or more if they need to. In Nassau County rats cannot come in through the sewers. We have a closed sewer system that does not have any open places for them to enter the sewer system.

## **Do rats only come out at night?**

No, rats can be active any time of the day. Rats do not see well, so they like it better when an area is quiet and dark, but rats will be active at other times of day as well, more so if there are safe areas for them to run.

## **How can I have rats? I have a cat or dog.**

Having cats or dogs does not mean you don't have rats. Many pets will not catch or kill rats, and the pet food, water, and animal waste can even attract rats.

## **I have been living here 7 (or 15, or 30) years, and we have never seen a rat before. We are not 'dirty'. Why are they here now?**

Rats travel throughout the county. There may have been rats living in yards near you. When rats set up a home in an area, they may be seen in two or three yards, but a neighbor four, or five homes away would not know there are rats in the area. Having rats doesn't mean someone has a 'dirty' yard. Rats simply find a good source of food, look for shelter, and build their homes. Once rats are exterminated, if their food and shelter is removed, it is likely you will not see them for another 7 (or 15, or 30) years.

## **What should I do if I see a rat?**

Sometimes a rat may be just passing through. If the rat is in your yard, or was seen near where you live, and was seen several times, you can hire an exterminator, or in Nassau County, call the Health Department for information on how to get rid of rats. In Nassau County call the Department of Health - Community Sanitation Program at **516-227-9715 weekdays from 9:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.**

## **What should I do if I have a question or complaint about a rat?**

The Health Department Office of Community Sanitation will respond to questions and complaints about residential complaints, including rodent infestation, rats and their environments. Please call 516-227-9715 weekdays from 9:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. for information about rodent control.

**Is more information available?**

If Nassau County residents have additional questions or concerns regarding Rats in their area, they can call the Nassau County Department of Health - Community Sanitation Program at **516-227-9715**.

You can visit the following web site(s) for more information:

New York State Department of Health  
<http://www.health.state.ny.us/nysdoh/pest/rats.htm>