

Cockroach fact sheet

The two most commonly found cockroaches in the UK are:

- The German Cockroach
- The Oriental Cockroach



Cockroaches are large insects which range in size from 10-23mm they have a long antennae and two pairs of wings. The German Cockroach is dark brown and smaller than the Oriental cockroach, which is black in colour. The German variety can climb smooth surfaces.

Health risks

Cockroaches can carry food germs on their bodies and are responsible for the spread of diseases such as dysentery and gastro-enteritis. They will feed on almost anything including faecal matter. Food contamination will occur when the insect comes in to contact with food, food preparation surfaces or through faecal contamination of foodstuffs.

Life cycle

The female cockroach produces up to eight purse-like egg cases at monthly intervals. The cases can contain up to 30 eggs and nymphs hatch in 2-4 weeks (6-12 weeks for Oriental cockroaches). The nymph looks the same as an adult cockroach, only smaller.

Recognising a cockroach problem

You may see their eggs, which are the size and shape of a small kidney bean and brown in colour. You may also notice cockroach faeces, which looks like black pepper.

Where do they like to live?

Cockroaches can be found in premises where food is stored or handled. They will spend most of the day hiding in cracks and crevices in a building. They are most active at night and if a light is turned on will scamper away to hide.

Preventative treatment

You can help to prevent infestations by making sure your premises are clean and that there are no food sources or hiding places. Plug all small cracks around skirting boards, cupboards, pipes, sinks and water heaters with latex or silicone sealant. Larger holes will need to be patched. Move debris, firewood and rubbish away from the house and out of kitchens.

Dealing with a cockroach

Professional products and help are required for treating a cockroach infestation.