Where do they live?

Rats are typically found in urban areas, such as cities and towns, where they can find food and shelter. They are adaptable and can live in a variety of environments, including houses, schools, hospitals, and warehouses. Rats are also known for their ability to enter small spaces, such as cracks and crevices, which allows them to infest buildings and homes.

What do they eat?

Rats are omnivores, meaning they can eat both plant and animal matter. Their diet primarily consists of grains, seeds, and other food scraps, but they will also feed on insects, small animals, and even human food. Rats are known for their ability to eat almost anything, and they can cause significant damage to crops and stored foods.

What do rats do?

Rats are excellent climbers and swimmers, and they can travel long distances in search of food. They are also very good at finding their way around obstacles, and they can easily climb up walls and fences. Rats are also known for their ability to gnaw on things, which can cause significant damage to buildings and property.

Do rats bite?

Rats are not typically aggressive towards humans, but they will bite if they feel threatened or cornered. Rats use their teeth to cut and gnaw, and they can cause significant damage to buildings and property. It is important to keep rats out of your home and property to prevent them from causing damage.

Do rats carry diseases?

Rats can carry a variety of diseases, including typhus, leptospirosis, and hantavirus. They can also carry parasites, such as fleas and lice. It is important to keep rats out of your home and property to prevent the spread of disease.
What are the signs of infestation?

Sightings of live rats or droppings
Rats are particularly active at night, but may be seen during the day searching for food, water or shelter. Common rat droppings are capsule-shaped, (tapered at both ends), black and up to 12mm long. A rat will leave about 40 droppings a day. Fresh droppings will be soft and moist.

Runs
Rats follow the same routes when moving around and often leave trails through grass and low vegetation.

Footprints, smears and tail swipes
These can be seen on muddy or dusty surfaces. Smears are dark grey marks left on surfaces by repeated contact with the oils in rat fur.

Burrows
Rats can build complex tunnel systems, which often extend deep into the ground. Entrance holes 70-120mm in diameter will be seen in grassy banks, under tree roots and at the edge of paving or drain cover surrounds.

Nests
Sometimes nests can be found indoors, in lofts or under floorboards.

Gnawing
Rats gnaw continually to wear down their front teeth, even on non-food materials such as electrical cables, pipework and wooden fixtures.

Why must rats be controlled?
Rats can transmit many diseases to humans, including Salmonellosis (food poisoning) and Weils disease, usually from the urine of infected rats.

Rats may also cause considerable damage to buildings, foundations and other structures due to gnawing and burrowing.

How can I prevent rat infestation?
Householders can assist in preventing rat infestation by taking a number of simple precautions.
- Keep your home in good repair; rats only need a gap of 15mm to gain entry.
- Remove potential nesting sites by keeping yards and gardens clean and tidy, and by cutting back overgrown areas.
- Ensure that drain inspection covers are in place and are in good repair.
- Seal gaps around heating and water pipes.
- Ventilation bricks and slots should already have a fine wire mesh incorporated. If this is worn, replace it externally with 3.15mm insect mesh.
- Do not leave household waste where rats can get access to it, close dustbin lids and composters and do not feed wild birds to excess - you may be feeding rats as well.

How can I get rid of rats?
Rats are adaptable, highly mobile and breed rapidly to produce large rat infestations. This combination can make rat control a difficult task for the untrained individual.

If you decide to carry out the work yourself there are two options - poison or break back traps:

Poison (rodenticide) can be bought from most hardware stores and most garden centres. Put the poison in a safe and secure place out of reach of children and pets and ALWAYS wash your hands after use. Use of rodenticide can take 4-12 days to take effect. This may result in a localised foul smell due to the presence of carcasses.

Break-back traps should be placed next to walls where rats tend to travel. The trap should be baited with chocolate, biscuit or cereal. Most rats are wary of new objects placed in their environment and will avoid them for a period of time. So do not set the spring on the trap until bait has been eaten then re-bait and reset the trap. Use several traps and examine them daily, removing dead rats as soon as they are discovered. All traps should be handled with care.

Seek professional advice from the Council's Environmental Health Service if you require any assistance.

Warning: When using pesticides always follow the instructions on the label. Remember that pesticides may be harmful to other animals e.g. household pets etc.