



## **Controlling rats in the chicken coop – Free downloadable checklist.**

### **Section A. Before you start : know the enemy.**

Have you noticed changes in your chickens' behavior? Are they refusing to roost at night? If so, check roost for droppings.	<input type="checkbox"/>
In your chicken coop, check feed bins and feeders for any signs of droppings.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Check nest boxes and bedding (used or stored) for droppings.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Check where they are getting into your run or coop. Look for telltale signs such as holes under fencing. See this page for an example : <a href="https://www.raising-happy-chickens.com/rat-poison.html#vigilant">https://www.raising-happy-chickens.com/rat-poison.html#vigilant</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Check any log piles you have : are there signs of droppings or holes on the periphery?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Check compost heaps : look for holes at the bottom.	<input type="checkbox"/>
In your yard, check around the perimeter fence for droppings.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Check in your own home to see whether there are any signs of droppings, particularly if your chicken coop is close by.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Check the droppings you find to assess whether you have rats or mice. If you don't know how to tell, see this page: <a href="https://www.raising-happy-chickens.com/rat-droppings.html">https://www.raising-happy-chickens.com/rat-droppings.html</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Section B. Prioritise your chickens' health : check your coop.

Take up any and all sources of grain or other food in your chicken house/coop. Rats will both eat it and leave infected droppings in it.	<input type="checkbox"/>
If you find droppings in feed containers, discard it immediately, clean the container with a disinfectant solution and refill with fresh feed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are your containers made of metal with a secure lid? If not, consider replacing them with an automated feeder. See this page for more details : <a href="https://www.raising-happy-chickens.com/best-automatic-chicken-feeder.html">https://www.raising-happy-chickens.com/best-automatic-chicken-feeder.html</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If you find droppings in the feeders themselves, discard the feed, clean the feeder with a disinfectant solution and refill with fresh feed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Take up all water sources from your chicken house – put them outside. Rats' urine in water is a common source of illness in chickens.	<input type="checkbox"/>
If you have just discovered rats in your coop and you had waterers inside, discard any remaining water, clean containers thoroughly and refill.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make sure any grit or oyster shell containers are covered – although rats won't eat these, they may run across the containers especially if they are on or near a wall.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Check your coop inside and out for gaps (as small as a pencil width) and, wherever possible, either fill in or cover with a fine mesh / hardware cloth.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is your coop raised off the ground? Rats love nesting below sheds and coops. Enclose the area with wood or hardware cloth.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have pipes coming into your coop? Seal any gaps around them.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Check around doors, windows and vents. If there are gaps, fill them in. Cover windows and vents with a strong mesh or hardware cloth.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make it part of your routine to check and turn bedding very regularly.	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Section C. Outside the coop.**

Wherever possible, use a treadle feeder or similar.	<input type="checkbox"/>
If a treadle feeder is not possible, take up any grain feeders at night and put in a secure area away from the chicken coop.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use a watering system which is either totally enclosed or raised off the ground.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Give grain-based 'treats' early in the day. If you want to fill your chickens' crops before roosting, use a "non-rat-friendly" treat like mealworms.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Remove wood piles to at least 100 feet from your chicken run.	<input type="checkbox"/>
If you have a compost pile within your run, use it only for green matter : plants, flowers, grass and leaves etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>
If you want to compost vegetable matter, use an enclosed compost bin. See this page for further details : <a href="https://www.raising-happy-chickens.com/rats-and-mice.html">https://www.raising-happy-chickens.com/rats-and-mice.html</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If you want to compost vegetable matter but don't want an enclosed bin, make sure the pile is at least 100 feet from your chicken house.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do not put cooked food onto compost heaps.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keep grass and shrubbery around your coop cut back. Long growth provides cover for rats and mice.	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Section D. Dealing with an existing rodent problem.

Assess which method of extermination you require, and which you are comfortable with. For information about different methods see this page : <a href="https://www.raising-happy-chickens.com/getting-rid-of-rats.html">https://www.raising-happy-chickens.com/getting-rid-of-rats.html</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If you decide you need to use poison to control a bad infestation, see this page about how to use it safely : <a href="https://www.raising-happy-chickens.com/rat-poison.html">https://www.raising-happy-chickens.com/rat-poison.html</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If poison is the only option, make sure you have a lockable trap with an entrance small enough that only rats and mice can get inside. For further information see this article : <a href="https://www.raising-happy-chickens.com/rat-poison.html#safe">https://www.raising-happy-chickens.com/rat-poison.html#safe</a>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If using poison, change the type you use every few weeks to avoid the rats becoming immune. Your local feed store will advise, or buy online.	<input type="checkbox"/>
If you decide on a trapping method, whichever one it is, make sure you buy the right size of trap depending on whether you have rats or mice.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Whichever type of trap you use, make sure it is set out of the reach of children, pets and your chickens.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Set traps in areas where you have assessed rats or mice to be active. They should be as near to a wall as possible – rats do not run in open spaces if they can avoid it.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leave your trap unbaited for two days to allow the rats to become used to it. Add bait on the third day.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Test out different types of bait. Peanut butter, cat food and bacon bits all work well.	<input type="checkbox"/>
If using electronic traps such as the one reviewed at this page : <a href="https://www.raising-happy-chickens.com/electric-rat-trap.html">https://www.raising-happy-chickens.com/electric-rat-trap.html</a> make a note on your calendar to check the batteries and replace regularly.	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Section E. After the event : cleaning up safely.

Before it ever becomes an issue, check with your local council as to how you should dispose of rats and mice. Different countries and areas have different methods. Make sure you know what yours is.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keep a stock of disposable plastic gloves, and a stock of strong plastic bags, for dealing with rodents and their droppings.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keep a trowel or small spade available for use only with rodents or their droppings. Make sure it is kept out of the reach of children and pets. Hanging it on a high nail on the wall of your coop is a good solution.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keep a small spray bottle (such as a plant spray) for use only with rodents and their droppings and again, keep it out of reach.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never pick up a dead rodent by hand. Before handling it at all, make up a solution of water and bleach and use the spray bottle to soak it. Wear your gloves at all times, even when not touching the rodent.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using your identified trowel or small spade, pick up the rodent and place it in a plastic bag. Seal tightly and place that bag inside a second one.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dispose of it in whichever way your council has advised.	<input type="checkbox"/>
In terms of droppings or nesting materials, use the same method as for the rodent itself. Never dispose of rat or mice droppings on a compost heap.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Once disposed of, soak the area where the rat, mouse, droppings or nesting materials have been for at least five minutes in a strong solution of bleach and water before scrubbing with a yard brush. Rinse carefully so that your chickens and other pets do not get feet burned by bleach.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Finally, wash the trowel in a bleach solution, dispose of your gloves and wash your hands thoroughly with soap or an alcohol-based cleanser.	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Thank you for downloading my free checklist. Come back to see me again soon at <https://www.raising-happy-chickens.com>.**

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