



## PEST CONTROL

# The German cockroach

### Key facts

The German cockroach is a pest to hygiene that can be introduced with purchased goods.

- It multiplies in heated buildings and can transmit germs to food and human beings through faeces and vomit.
- It is nocturnal and favours warm, humid environments.
- Infestations have nothing to do with unhygienic living conditions and can affect anyone.
- They can only be properly treated by a professional pest control service; insect spray will not get rid of an infestation.
- If you are worried you may have an infestation, collect the insects and have them examined by a pest control professional.

### Appearance

- Adults are 9–15 mm long, brown and flat and have long antennae.
- Two black horizontal stripes on the pronotum are the key feature that distinguishes them from the indigenous forest cockroach, which is harmless. The forest cockroach does not have these stripes.
- They cannot fly.



German cockroach, photo: Reiner Pospischil

- The faeces – small, dark granules – look like coffee grounds.



Cockroach faeces and remains of egg cases, photo: UGZ

- Young insect (nymph): 2–9 mm long depending on age, no wings, darker than adults but similar in appearance.



Adult German cockroach (left) with two nymphs of different ages, photo: UGZ

## Habits

- In Switzerland, only in heated buildings; in apartments, primarily in kitchens and bathrooms.
- Nocturnal, runs away quickly and hides in crevices when exposed to light.
- Prefers dark hiding places, humidity and warmth: electrical appliances such as refrigerators, dishwashers, coffee machines, etc.
- An indiscriminate omnivore: waste in rubbish bins, crumbs, splashes of grease.
- Can also appear in very clean households.

## Life cycle

- Females lay egg cases that contain 36 eggs on average.
- From the egg to the fully grown cockroach takes approximately 100 days at 24°C.

## Distribution

- Today, they are distributed around the world.
- They are found in the hotel and restaurant trade, the foodstuffs industry, in shopping centres, in swimming pools and in hospitals, as well as in homes.

## How do cockroaches get into a building?

- They are inadvertently introduced in luggage brought back from holidays, in used furniture, in packaging materials or from the workplace.
- Once inside the building, they move from apartment to apartment along ventilation ducts or pipes, for example.
- Typically, several apartments or the entire building will have problems with cockroaches.

## Significance and impact on health

- Cockroaches never arise from dirt and do not point to a lack of cleanliness.
- They are unhygienic, can transmit germs and must be combated.
- Their faeces and shed skins can trigger an allergic reaction.

## Combating cockroaches

- Cockroaches do not disappear by themselves.
- Cleaning does not help.

- Ask your neighbours if they also have problems with cockroaches and report the infestation to your property manager.
- Do not attempt to treat the infestation yourself using insect spray; the cockroaches may spread throughout the apartment or building.
- The cockroaches must be combated at the same time throughout the entire building.
- Leave treatment to a licensed Swiss pest control company.
- The aim should be to completely eradicate all cockroaches from the entire property.

## Who is responsible for the cost of treatment?

- If more than one apartment in the building is infested, the property manager is required to appoint a pest control company to deal with the infestation. All the apartments in the building must then be checked for cockroaches.
- The costs incurred cannot be passed on to tenants. See our leaflet *Pest infestations: your rights*. Residential properties are governed by Articles 256, 257f, g, h, 258 and 259 of the Swiss Code of Obligations.

## We are here to help

Call us, or send or bring in insects for us to inspect. We provide free advice to residents of Zurich.

Urban Pest Advisory Service:

Isabelle Landau Lüscher, Dr Gabi Müller, Marcus Schmidt

Telephone and personal appointments for residents of Zurich:

Walchestr. 31, 2nd floor, office 232

Tel. 044 412 28 38

Mo – Fr: 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm

Letters: Walchestrasse 31

Postfach 3251, 8021 Zurich

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