

Rodent-Proofing Checklist

For New Hope, MN Homeowners

A rodent-proofed home isn't one that never sees a mouse outside — it's one that never lets that mouse get in. Work through this checklist room by room and yard to yard. Guidance sourced from CDC and county vector-control recommendations.

How Small a Gap Are We Talking About?

Mice can fit through a hole about the width of a pencil — roughly 1/4 inch. Rats need a bit more room, but a gap the size of a quarter is enough. (Source: CDC)

Exterior Checklist

- Check where utility lines (electrical, gas, cable, plumbing) pass through exterior walls
- Inspect the foundation-to-ground gap around the entire house, especially at corners
- Check vent openings, including dryer vents and foundation vents, for gaps or damaged screens
- Look at the roofline, rafters, and eaves for gaps where wiring or plumbing stacks pass through
- Test weather stripping on all exterior doors; add a door sweep where daylight shows underneath
- Trim trees and bushes back from the roofline — overhanging branches give rodents a direct route to the attic
- Confirm the garage door seal makes full contact with the ground along its entire width

Interior Checklist

- Kitchen cabinets, especially behind and under lower cabinets where plumbing enters
- Closet floors and corners, particularly in older parts of the home
- Fireplace openings and the gap around the flue
- Window and door frames where trim has separated from the wall
- Spaces behind and underneath the refrigerator, washer, and dryer
- Under-sink cabinets, where pipes pass through the cabinet floor
- The attic, basement, and any wall-floor junctures in unfinished spaces
- Floor drains that are rarely used and may not have a proper trap seal

Sealing Materials That Actually Work

- Small holes: pack steel wool into the gap, then cover with caulk or spray foam to hold it in place
- Larger openings: use hardware cloth, metal sheeting, lath screen, or cement — not foam or caulk alone

- Avoid plain rubber, plastic, or wood patches on their own — rodents can chew through all three

Food & Yard Checklist

- Store pet food, birdseed, and bulk food in rodent-proof, covered metal or heavy plastic containers
- Keep garbage and compost in containers with tight-fitting lids
- Elevate stored items at least 18 inches off the ground and 12 inches from fences or walls
- Clear brush, woodpiles, and debris away from the house (100 ft. where possible, per CDC guidance)
- Do not leave pet food out overnight

When This Checklist Isn't Enough

This checklist closes off a lot of entry points, but a homeowner walkthrough will still miss things a trained inspection catches — gaps behind finished walls or activity already established in the attic. If you've already seen droppings, heard scratching, or gone through a round of sealing without the activity stopping, that's the point to bring in a professional inspection.