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Experts Warn About The Health Hazards Posed By Cockroaches

The National Pest Management Association shares potential risks and recommendations for avoiding cockroach infestations

March X, 2011 (Fairfax, VA) — Though they have long been a pest that causes one of the strongest reactions when discovered in a home or place of business, the health threats posed by cockroaches often don't factor into the disgust felt at encountering them. The National Pest Management Association (NPMA) cautions, however, that cockroaches can trigger allergic reactions and asthma attacks, in addition to other serious health hazards.

The saliva, droppings and decomposing bodies of cockroaches contain allergen proteins known to trigger allergies and increase the severity of asthma symptoms, especially in children. They are also capable of mechanically transmitting disease organisms, such as the bacteria that cause food poisoning, and are known to spread 33 different kinds of bacteria, six parasitic worms and at least seven other kinds of human pathogens.

"When people think of cockroaches, they definitely don't have a pleasant association, but they may not fully realize the severity of the effects cockroaches can have on their health," says Missy Henriksen, vice president of public affairs for NPMA. "We want to educate consumers about what they can do to avoid and eliminate these pests before being exposed to these risks."

Cockroaches prefer warm, moist places with available food sources, so eliminating those attractive environments can help prevent cockroach infestations. NPMA offers the following tips to avoid cockroach infestations:

- Do not allow dirty dishes to accumulate in the sink and remain there overnight
- Keep food scraps in the refrigerator or in containers with tight-fitting lids
- Remove garbage from the home on a routine basis and vacuum regularly
- Periodically check and clean the evaporation pan under the refrigerator or freezer
- Seal cracks around the outside of the home to prevent pest entryways
- If you suspect you have an infestation, contact a licensed pest professional to identify the species and recommend a course of treatment.

For more information or to find a pest professional visit: www.pestworld.org.

The NPMA, a non-profit organization with more than 7,000 members, was established in 1933 to support the pest management industry's commitment to the protection of public health, food and property.

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