

# American Cockroaches

## QUICK STATS:

**Color:**

Reddish-brown, with a yellowish figure 8 pattern on the back of the head

**Shape:**

Oval

**Size:**

2 inches long

**Region:**

Found throughout the U.S. and the world



# American Cockroaches



*Periplaneta americana* (L.)

## OVERVIEW:

The American cockroach, also called a "waterbug," is the largest of the house infesting cockroaches. Despite its name, the American cockroach is not native to North America, but was probably introduced via ships from Africa in the 1600s.

## HABITS:

Although American cockroaches can be found in homes, they are also common in larger commercial buildings such as restaurants, grocery stores, food processing plants and hospitals. They are known to infest food storage and food preparation areas, as well as basements, yards and alleys. They often enter structures through drains and pipes.

## THREATS:

Cockroaches have been reported to spread at least 33 kinds of bacteria, six kinds of parasitic worms and at least seven other kinds of human pathogens. They can pick up germs on the spines of their legs and bodies as they crawl through decaying matter or sewage and then carry these onto food or food surfaces.

## PREVENTION:

- Vacuum. Early and often is best for reducing harmful cockroach allergens.
- Keep a spotless kitchen. To prevent infestations, keep all your food and garbage in sealed containers and dispose of it regularly. Clean behind and under appliances regularly, as these are favorite hiding spots for cockroaches.
- Ventilate. Air out basements and crawl spaces to prevent moisture buildup.
- Seal the entrances. Close off cracks and holes around utility pipes that provide easy access to your home.
- Act quickly. If you find evidence of an infestation, contact a licensed pest professional to inspect and treat the problem.

## DID YOU KNOW? American cockroaches...

- can lay 10 or more oothecae (egg cases), each containing 14-16 eggs.
- are more active when the temperature is above 70°.
- are the most common species found in city sewer systems.

For more information, visit **PESTWORLD.org**

