



Our Insect Enemies



Keep Cockroaches Out And Breathe Easier

(NAPSA)—Cockroaches won't win any popularity contests. Not only are they disgusting to many people, but they also can contaminate food, transmit gastroenteritis and cause asthma, especially in children.

Asthma is a major public health problem in the United States, and is fast becoming a childhood epidemic. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, asthma is now the most common chronic disease among children, afflicting nearly 5 million people under the age of 18.

The National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) originally forged the link between cockroaches and childhood asthma in 1997. A large-scale study revealed that children who were allergic to cockroaches and exposed to high levels of the allergens found in roach droppings, eggs and carcasses were more than three times as likely to be hospitalized for asthma than children who either were not exposed or were not allergic. Since that time, further NIAID research has shown that exposure to certain cockroach antigens not only can trigger asthma attacks in chronic sufferers, but also can cause the disease.

"Since asthma has become a problem for so many, it is vital to eliminate asthma triggers, including cockroaches," said Orkin Pest Control entomologist Frank Meek.

Roaches enter our homes, Meek says, because they are looking for three things: food, water and a suitable place to live. Once they get in, they can be hard to force out because:

- They move quickly, running up to three miles per hour;
- They reproduce frequently—each female lays several eggs cases per year—and abundantly—an egg case contains from 12 to 40 individual eggs depending on the species; and
- Roaches are hardy—they can survive as long as a week without a head.



MORE THAN A NUISANCE—
Cockroaches can spread disease and aggravate asthma, especially among children.

"The good news is that it's not hard to make your home very roach-unfriendly," added Meek. To help keep roaches—and the asthma allergens they leave behind—out of their homes and away from their children, homeowners should follow a few basic steps:

- Eliminate food sources by cleaning up spills and storing food in sealed containers;
- Inspect possible entry points such as windows, door frames and pipes and eliminate any openings—no matter how small—with screen or caulk; roaches can fit into cracks as thin as a quarter;
- Remove items that tend to harbor cockroaches, such as piles of newspapers or magazines, cardboard boxes and grocery bags;
- Store garbage cans in dry places—not under the kitchen sink;
- Trim tree limbs so they don't touch or hang over the house;
- Correct moisture problems such as leaking roofs or blocked gutters; and
- Consider regular treatment by a licensed professional in and around the home.

For more information on eliminating cockroaches, a free pamphlet is available at www.orkin.com, or call 1-800-800-ORKIN to request a free inspection.