

# FLIES

Fly is the common name used to refer to a range of insects which have only two wings. That includes fruit flies, blow flies (blue bottles/green bottles) and mosquitoes. The common housefly and bluebottle are the flies that most frequently causes a nuisance in the home.

However, all flies can cause problems as they can carry bacteria and can transmit diseases via body hairs, hairs on their tarsi and through saliva and faeces.

## What do houseflies look like?

The housefly is 6-7 mm long, with the female usually larger than the male. The female can be distinguished by the relatively wide space between the eyes (in males, the eyes almost touch). The head of the adult fly has reddish eyes and "sponging" mouthparts. The thorax bears four narrow black stripes and there is a sharp upward bend in the fourth longitudinal wing vein. The abdomen is grey or yellowish with a dark midline and irregular dark markings on the sides. The underside of the male is yellowish.

The Council provides information leaflets on the following range of pests:

Ants  
Bedbugs  
Cockroaches  
Fleas  
Flies  
Mice  
Pigeons  
Rats  
Slugs  
Spiders  
Wasps



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## Where do they live?

Houseflies are commonly found where people work or live because of the ready supply of food. Bluebottles, which are larger than the common housefly, are also often found in human environments, and are particularly attracted by meat and decaying materials.

## Where do they come from?

House fly eggs are laid in moist or rotting organic matter such as household rubbish, compost or manure. Once hatched, flies can reach maturity in a very short period of time depending on temperature. A female fly can lay up to 900 eggs during the one to three months of her adult life.

Common houseflies have a flight range of considerable distance and can easily move from breeding grounds to the home. A sudden appearance of bluebottles in the home normally indicates that a small animal (rodent or bird) has died - possibly under the floorboards or up a chimney.

## Why do flies come indoors?

Houseflies and bluebottles come indoors looking for food. They are not choosy as to the type of food they settle on, and are likely to be highly active once indoors. Female bluebottles are easily able to find sources of suitable food and are often found in domestic kitchens. Because of the way flies feed and where they are may have come from before settling on the food, it is best to make sure that food is covered, to avoid contamination.

## Can they cause harm?

Bluebottles and houseflies go from filth to food in a short time and have the ability to carry diseases such as gastroenteritis (tummy bug), salmonella, cholera, typhoid and they can also possibly transmit intestinal worms.



## How can I prevent housefly infestation?

The best ways of controlling and avoiding housefly infestations are good hygiene and taking a number of simple precautions to prevent their entry to the home. Drains should be cleaned frequently, particularly near kitchens. Waste bins should be covered to avoid providing the ideal breeding conditions for flies.

## How can I get rid of houseflies?

Insecticidal control using fly sprays ("knock down" sprays, available at most supermarkets) is a good, almost instant, way of dealing with flies in your property.

Remove dead flies immediately and remember not to use insecticide near food and food-preparation surfaces. Insecticide may also be harmful to household pets and humans should not inhale it. Insecticide is extremely harmful to fish. Flypapers, while unsightly, are another solution. Specialist electric ultra-violet fly killers control flies, however, their efficiency can be affected by where they are placed.

**Seek professional advice from the Council's Environmental Health Service if you require any assistance.**

**Warning:** Use biocides safely. Always read the label and product information before use.