

# Ants



*What You Need to Know*



### ***What are ants?***

Ants are small insects that can carry more than 25 times their body weight.

Ants are beneficial to humans because they eat other insects, but can cause damage to structures.

Ants can make homes almost anywhere. These homes can hold from a few hundred ants to over one million.

Ants live in ant colonies. Each colony has one queen ant, worker ants and male ants. The queen ant lays all the eggs for her colony.

### ***What is the life cycle of ants?***

A queen and her colony can live to be 30 years old. Worker ants can live for one to three years; but male ants live for only a few weeks.

### ***What do ants feed on?***

Ants typically feed on:

- leaves
- sugary foods
- dead creatures
- fruit
- aphids

These food sources are usually found on the ground. Ants will also tunnel into wood to form nests.



### ***How do I know I have an ant problem?***

The presence of a large number of ants is the main indicator of ant problems. Damaged wood can be another indicator in some cases.

Ants may crawl across sidewalks, driveways and basement floors. If the number of ants is low (less than 10) there usually isn't an established colony nearby and you don't need to worry about them.

Wood will often show damage if there are carpenter ants around. Carpenter ants, common in Manitoba, tunnel their way into wood to form nests. The tunnels will cause the wood to become hollow and weak.

Fire ants are another species of ant that can be troublesome. Fire ants have copper brown heads. They may sting people if they feel threatened. However, fire ants have never been found in Manitoba.



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Stings from most ants are usually harmless, causing only minor reactions. However, in some cases the stings can cause allergic reactions.

Minor reactions can result in the following to occur around the sting:

- Stinging pain
- Blistering
- Itching
- Welting
- Swelling
- Reddening

Allergic reactions occur within an hour from being stung and can result in the following:

- Flushing of the skin
- Swelling of eyes, tongue, lips and throat
- Headaches
- Fainting
- Hives appearing all over the body
- Chest pains
- Nausea

Severe allergic reactions need to be treated by a doctor, as they can be fatal. Minor reactions will be gone within a week or two.



### **Where do ants live?**

The areas surrounding houses provide a number of ideal homes for ants, including wood and soil. Ants will burrow into wood or soil and create tunnels where their colonies live.

# How can ants be prevented?

The first step is to clean your home regularly. Clean up spills, wash dishes and vacuum regularly – these are just a few things you can do to prevent pest infestation.

Ants can make homes in the holes and small burrows of moist areas. The following will help prevent ants in these areas:

- if you have moist conditions in your home, contact the Manitoba Housing Authority's Housing Communication Centre
- keep food sealed
- clean your home regularly
- remove old and untreated wood



## How does the Manitoba Housing Authority help get rid of pests in my home?

If you think you have pests in your home, phone the Manitoba Housing Authority (MHA) immediately. The MHA does not recommend that you treat pest problems on your own, as doing so may cause further infestations.

**Call the Manitoba Housing Authority's Housing Communication Centre at 945-8765 in Winnipeg; or toll free at 1-800-661-4663.**

**Treatment** > A professional exterminator will be hired to treat your unit for pests. Your belongings will be respected and taken care of while your home is treated.

With your co-operation, any pest concerns can be treated without complications.

Keep clothing and bedding clean and laundered. Keep clothes in a sealed bag until pests have been completely exterminated.