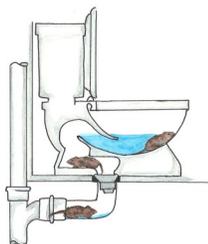


# Rat in the toilet – It's not an urban myth!

## Rat in the toilet

### How does a rat get in your toilet?

Rats get up into toilets by following the scent of food washed down from your kitchen drain in your home to the sewer system. While searching for food they can climb your homes stand pipe (the pipe that connects the side-sewer pipe to the sewer). Unable to reach the kitchen sink they can come up into the toilet bowl instead.



### What do I do if I have a rat in my toilet?

#### STAY CALM!

**Keep the lid down!** Prevent the rat from jumping out. Leave your toilet lid down when not in use.

#### Squirt some liquid dish soap in the toilet!

This will help break the surface tension of the water. Soap degrades the oils on the rats so it cannot stay afloat in the water.



**Flush the toilet!** The rat will usually go back down the it came up.

## Tips to keep rats

Here are some simple things you can do at home to deter rats from being attracted to your sewer.



- Keep your kitchen sink rinsed clean and use garbage disposals as little as possible.
- Use sink strainers to catch all food waste during dish washing.
- Clean your drain! Use ½ cup of baking soda followed by ½ cup of vinegar and rinse with boiling water. You can also use 1 cup of bleach and rinse with boiling water. Do this once or twice a month.



## Who do I call if I find a rat in my toilet?

If you find a rat in your toilet you can report it to Public Health online at [www.kingcounty.gov/rats](http://www.kingcounty.gov/rats) or call 206-263-9566.

If you live outside of the city of Seattle and you find a rat in your toilet you may want to contact your city's public utilities department or your local sewer district. You can locate their contact information in the government ages or blue pages of the phone book or on your utility bill.

## How do rats get into the sewers

Rats get into sewer systems through broken or faulty side-sewers. Public Health can identify a broken side-sewer by dye testing a suspected rat burrow.



Rat burrow to be dye tested.

If a dye test indicates a broken side-sewer it is recommended that the homeowner hire a licensed contractor to make necessary repairs.



A positive dye test results.

### What about rats in storm drains?

Occasionally, rats are seen going into a storm drain. In most cases the rats are ducking into the storm drain just to avoid a predator or from being seen. In some parts of Seattle rats may get into the sewer if the sewer system is a combined drainage and sanitary sewer system.

## Seattle Sewer Baiting Program

The goal of the Seattle Sewer Baiting program is to control rats in the sewer system of Seattle.

### Our program:

- Responds to citizen complaints about rats in their toilet.
- Tracks neighborhoods that have are impacted by sewer rat activity.
- Performs routine inspections and baiting for rats in impacted neighborhoods.
- Investigates suspected side-sewer breaks.
- Educates communities about preventing and controlling rodent infestations when sewer rats are a concern.



Health & Environmental Inspector places bait in a manhole for sewer rat control.

**Public Health**   
Seattle & King County

Environmental Health Services  
401 5th Ave, Suite 1100 Seattle, WA 98104  
206-263-9566

[www.kingcounty.gov/rats](http://www.kingcounty.gov/rats)

**Available in Alternate Formats**

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