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Beware of Aggressive Rats Searching for Food During Shutdowns, CDC Warns

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The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has warned that rats, whose sources of food have been impacted by shutdown of businesses such as restaurants, are acting unusual and aggressive.

The CDC said [on its website](#) Thursday that rodent control and environmental health programs may see an increase in service requests as the rats fight for limited food during the coronavirus pandemic.

"Community-wide closures have led to a decrease in food available to rodents, especially in dense commercial areas. Some jurisdictions have reported an increase in rodent activity as rodents search for new sources of food. Environmental health and rodent control programs may see an increase in service requests related to rodents and reports of unusual or aggressive rodent

behavior," the CDC said.

The CDC said there tends to be a decrease in rodent population following natural disasters such as hurricanes, followed by an increase in rodent populations as commercial activity returns to normal.

"Environmental health programs should continue rodent monitoring and control activities after these events," the CDC said.

Bobby Corrigan, an urban rodentologist who has both a master's degree and Ph.D. in rodent pest management, told the New York Times Sunday that the rodents are turning on each other.

"The rats are not becoming aggressive toward people, but toward each other," he said. "They're simply turning on each other."

The CDC said established guidelines should be followed when cleaning up after rodent infestations to prevent exposure to rodent-borne diseases. Fleas are common on rodents. "In areas of heavy rodent infestations, workers should consider using a repellent registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as effective against fleas to prevent flea bites and minimize exposure to fleaborne disease," the CDC said.