You can control household pests naturally. Good housekeeping is the best prevention: Clean up all food and drink spills immediately. Store all food and drink in sealed containers. Insects can be trapped and killed without resorting to dangerous chemicals: A poison nontoxic to humans is mixed with a food that insects find attractive, and spread in the infested area. Examples include oatmeal (attractive) and plaster of Paris (poisonous), and cocoa powder and flour (attractive) and borax (poisonous). Here are other solutions for specific household pests:

**ANTS**
Sprinkle powdered red chili pepper, paprika, dried peppermint, or borax where the ants are entering.

**RATS & MICE**
Holes in exterior or interior walls should be closed off and storage spaces kept orderly. Garbage should be kept tightly covered. To catch rodents, the most efficient system is the oldest: mouse and rat traps.

**FLEAS**
Feed pet brewer’s yeast in powder mixed with food or by tablets.

**BEETLES**
Kill manually when you see them.

**COCKROACHES**
Air clothes well in the sun; store in airtight containers, and scatter sachets of lavender or cedar chips in with clothing. Avoid using mothballs, which contain paradichlorobenzene and/or naphthalene. According to the EPA, paradichlorobenzene can cause headaches, swollen eyes, loss of appetite, nose and throat irritations, and even cancer. Naphthalene can damage your body’s red blood cells.

**TERMITES**
Any wooden parts of the house should be at least 18 inches off the ground, as subterranean termites cannot tolerate being exposed to air and light.

**MOTHS**
Mix by stirring and sifting 1 ounce of trisodium phosphate (a cleaner available at most hardware stores), 4 ounces of borax, 4 ounces of sugar, and 8 ounces of flour. Spread on floor of infested area. Repeat after 4 days and again after 2 weeks.

To learn what you can do to make your home a healthy one, call or visit 1-800-464-HELP www.delawarehealthyhomes.org