

## Meal Moths

Also known as 'Pantry Pests' these are one of the most common pests found in the household. The color of the Indian meal moth is what distinguishes it from other moths. The wings are a dull gray with reddish brown wing tips. The common meal moth has a brown body and the wings are light brown with dark brown patches at the base and tip. There are two distinct, white, wavy lines separating the two shades of brown.



It is the meal moth larvae (caterpillar) that causes the most damage.

**Feeding:** The larvae most commonly feed on stored dry foods such as grains and cereals, cornmeal, flour, cookies, dried fruits, nuts, chocolate, pasta, crackers just to name a few. They may also infest bird seed, dried flowers, dried pet food, and dried plants.

**Evidence:** The adult meal moth is most likely seen flying around lights and the television at night. The larvae spins silk as they feed and travel which may be detectable in their food source. They may be seen traveling up the walls inside food cabinets when they leave their food sites.

**Control:** Examine all susceptible foods to locate the source of the infestation. Discard all infested products. Empty and thoroughly clean cabinets and shelves with a vacuum cleaner, paying particular attention to the cracks and corners. Empty or discard the vacuum cleaner bag after use.

**Prevention:** We may need to use traps to break the cycle and prevent reinfestation. You will want to store susceptible foods in sealable glass, metal, or heavy plastic containers or in the freezer or refrigerator until you are convinced the infestation is gone. Purchase dried goods in quantities that will be used in short amounts of time rather than bulk quantities. Inspect dried goods and packaging before you put your newly purchased groceries into your cabinets.