San Francisco Pest Management

San Francisco Pest Management says Gut Bugs Affect Cockroach Feces

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Commensal bacteria living in the gastrointestinal tracts of cockroaches lace the insects? feces with chemical cues that mediate social behavior, according to a study. The microbiome isn?t just important for digestion and immunity; it may also have a hand in social relationships among animals. Research showed that volatile compounds produced by bacterial fermentation attracts the insects to aggregate. The involvement of microbes in animal communication and behavioral systems is starting to be understood.

Researchers have known since the 1970s that cockroaches are attracted to their own feces. It has been determined that even cockroaches that were raised in sterile conditions, so that they?d carry no bacteria in their guts, are attracted to microbe-rich feces. The sterile excrement lacked volatile fatty acids called carboxylic acids, which may influence cockroach behavior. Research has shown a synthetic mixture of six common carboxylic acids, the insects gathered has concluded that it?s the bacteria rather than the cockroach itself that are involved in producing this signal.

Cockroaches are not unusual in this regard. Previous work has suggested a similar role for the bacteria in hyenas? anal scent glands, where the microbes produce fatty acids that may aid individual recognition to

distinguish group members from intruders. Over time it may be discovered there are lots of examples of this type of thing occurring in nature, from insects all the way up, possibly, to humans.

Cockroaches can contaminate food with their waste and saliva which contains bacteria that can cause food poisoning, diarrhea, and Staphylococcus infections. Many disease-causing organisms can grow and multiply in their digestive systems and be transmitted to silverware, plates, cooking surfaces, etc. during defecation. Breathing dust containing cockroach feces or body parts can cause an allergic reaction and asthma, especially in children. As far as the diseases that cockroaches can spread, they can pick up Salmonella on their legs and deposit it to food, which can cause food poisoning if ingested.

San Francisco Pest Management states, ?It is important for people to take preventative measures to protect their families and properties from the health threats associated with cockroaches. Sanitation is the first phase in a cockroach control program and you should make efforts to reduce water, food and shelter available to cockroaches.?

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