

# BED BUGS

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Bed bugs are found worldwide. In recent years, bed bugs have been making a comeback because of changing insect control practices, pesticide resistance and increased international travel. Travel spreads them because the bugs and their eggs are easily transported in luggage, clothing, bedding, and furniture.

## Quick facts

- Bed bugs are fast moving insects that eat mostly at night when their host is asleep.
- Prefer human blood but will feed on chickens, mice, and rabbits, too.
- They feed on any area of exposed skin, such as the face, neck, shoulders, arms or hands.
- The bites don't hurt, so the person usually doesn't know that he/she has been bitten, but bed bug bites do irritate the skin.
- Depending on availability of food and temperature (70-82F is optimal); it takes 5 weeks to 4 months for the maturation of a bed bug from egg to adult.
- They can go 80 to 140 days without a meal.
- Adults live about 10 months.

## Do bed bugs spread disease?

- Bed bugs are **not** known to transmit disease; however, they can cause physical and mental stress.
- A reaction to the bites can take 1- 14 days to develop, and some people have no reaction.
- Bed bug bites look like mosquito, flea, and spider bites. The only way to confirm the bite is from a bed bug is to find evidence of the bugs in your bed/bedroom.

## What do bed bugs look like?

- Adult bed bugs are oval shaped, wingless, 1/3 inch long, rusty red or mahogany color, and shaped like an apple seed.
- They are flat until after they have eaten.
- Nymphs or immature bed bugs look just like adults but smaller and a lighter yellowish-white color.
- Eggs are white and the size of a poppy seed.



## How are bed bug infestations recognized?

- Look for eggs, egg cases; shed skins, fecal spots and bug.
- 85% are found on or near the bed so focus on the mattress, bed frame and headboard area.
- Inspect all seams and surfaces as well as the box springs.
- They can crawl into very small, narrow places.
- The other 15% are found in upholstered furniture, bedroom cabinets, along baseboards, under wallpaper, in carpets and wall hangings.
- They may move to adjoining rooms in heavy infestations.
- You can see nymphs and adults with the naked eye, but may need a magnifying lens to see eggs.
- They also have a foul sweet rotting meat type smell in larger infestations.

### **Where are bed bugs found?**

- Bed bugs hide during the day in dark, protected sites.
- They like fabric, wood, and paper surfaces.
- They are usually fairly close to where the host sleeps, although they can be found on couches and chairs also.
- Bed bugs initially can be found about tufts, seams, and folds of mattresses, later spreading to crevices in the bedstead.
- In heavier infestations, they may be hiding in places farther from the bed. They may hide in window and door frames, electrical boxes, floor cracks, baseboards, furniture, and under the tack board of wall-to-wall carpeting.
- Bed bugs often crawl upward to hide in pictures, wall hangings, drapery pleats, loosened wallpaper, cracks in plaster, and ceiling moldings.

### **How are bed bugs spread?**

- Inspect antiques and secondhand furniture thoroughly before bringing them into your home.
- Place new or second-hand clothing in a dryer set on the highest heat the fabric can stand for at least 20 minutes when you bring the clothing home.
- While you are traveling, inspect any room where you will be staying, paying close attention to the sheets and mattress.
- After you return from a trip, check your luggage for insects.

### **Bed bug management**

- Insecticides alone will not control bed bug infestations.
- They must be used in conjunction with removing and cleaning any places they may hide and following up with regularly looking for the bugs to make sure they have been eradicated.

#### **Chemical treatments -**

- The best pesticides for bed bugs are only available to pest management professionals. Some chemicals come in liquid form and others are a dust.
- Pest management professionals will be able to assess which pesticides will work for specific situations.

#### **Non-chemical treatments -**

- Vacuuming – using the suction wand of a strong vacuum, target the seams of the mattresses and box springs, along the perimeters of the carpets, under baseboards and anywhere else bed bugs may live. This process will need to be repeated several days in a row. After each vacuuming, remove the vacuum bag, tape it shut, seal in a plastic bag and dispose of in a trash can away from the house.
- Steam or heat treatment – portable steam cleaners can be used to clean mattresses and furniture.
- Chilling – Bringing the temperature down below 32F for several days will also kill bed bugs.
- Laundry – a home laundry dryer is very good at killing bed bugs. 10 – 15 minutes of high heat drying will kill the bed bugs.
- Sealing up hiding places – after the cleaning and treatment has been done the first time, it is important to seal any holes or cracks in the walls, wallpaper, windows and doors near the sleeping area.
- It is important to keep clutter at a minimum and vacuum the previously infested areas regularly.

Brought to you by:

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