

If You Find Bed Bugs in Your Home

Things you should **NOT** do:

- **PANIC.** Bed bugs do not spread disease. Elimination may take some time.
- **IGNORE THE PROBLEM.** This will only allow the infestation to get worse.
- **TRY TO TAKE CARE OF THE PROBLEM YOURSELF.** Many over-the-counter products do not work and can spread the infestation. Incorrectly using pesticide products is dangerous.
- **DISCARD FURNITURE IMMEDIATELY.** This can be expensive and will not fix the problem. New furniture will likely become infested. Furniture removal may spread bugs to other rooms in the home.

Things you **SHOULD** do:

- **NOTIFY YOUR LANDLORD.** Do this as soon as possible.
- **CONSULT AN EXPERT.** It is best to work with a professional to discuss chemical and non-chemical methods of control.
- **MAINTAIN YOUR ROUTINE.** Don't stop sleeping in your bed or leave your home. This can spread bed bugs to other rooms or places you stay.
- **ELIMINATE CLUTTER.** Bed bugs like to hide in dark, hard-to-find areas. Less clutter means fewer hiding spots for bed bugs.
- **DESTROY ANYTHING YOU DISCARD.** Make sure that you destroy items you get rid of so that someone else does not get bed bugs!

Treating Bed Bug Infestations

To address bed bug infestations, you should consult with a pest control expert to verify that bed bugs are the cause of your concerns. Many insects look similar to bed bugs but are not treated in the same way.

A pest control expert can explain your treatment options. Some companies use an integrated pest management (IPM) approach. IPM treats pest infestations using:

- Chemical methods, like pesticide sprays or dusts
- Non-chemical methods, like heat treatment or physical removal

Before doing any treatments yourself, consult with the pest control company. Some DIY remedies may make professional treatments less successful.

Preventing Bed Bug Infestations

- Avoid picking up used furniture, or closely inspect and clean it before bringing it home.
- Reduce clutter in the home to give bed bugs fewer places to hide.
- When traveling, check your hotel room for signs of bed bugs.
- After traveling, check luggage carefully and launder all clothing immediately.
- Start monitoring! Bed bug monitors can be placed around the bed to help you catch an infestation sooner rather than later.

BED BUGS

What You Need to Know:

- **Detection**
- **Control**
- **Prevention**



Developed by the
Missouri Bootheel Region
Bed Bug Task Force

What are Bed Bugs?

Bed bugs are blood-feeding parasites. They do not fly. These bugs feed on humans and animals. Bed bugs have been a known pest for hundreds of years. Since the late 1990s, bed bug reports have been increasing in the U.S. and other parts of the world.

Bed bugs must feed on blood in order to grow. The bugs usually hide during the day in cracks and crevices and then come out to feed at night. In areas with severe infestations, bed bugs may be active and feeding during the day as well.

Bed Bug Signs

- Finding live or dead bed bugs
- Finding bed bug eggs or old skins left behind when the bed bugs molt (grow to the next stage)
- Finding dried blood or staining on mattresses or other furniture



Photo Courtesy of Gary Alpert, Harvard University, Bugwood.org

Identifying Bed Bugs

All stages of bed bugs can be seen with the naked eye. Eggs and early stage larvae will be *very* small.

- **Eggs**—white or clear, will be glued to surfaces
- **Larvae or Instars**— vary in size depending on stage; light colored unless they recently had a blood meal
- **Adults** — flat, reddish colored, and about the size of an apple seed

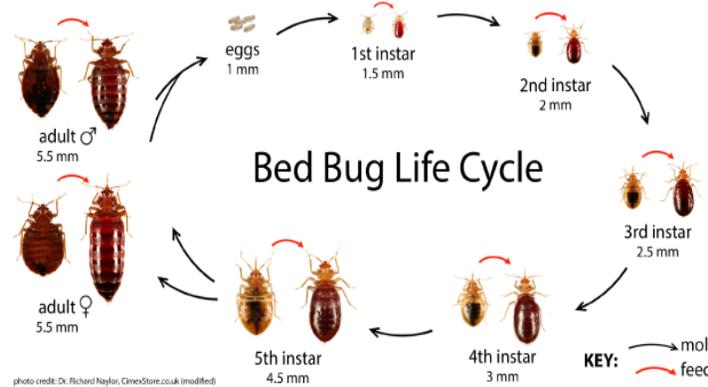


Photo Courtesy of National Pesticide Information Center (NPIC)

How Do Bed Bugs Move?

Bed bugs are found in homes, hotels, public transit, schools, and many other places. They can easily be moved in or on clothing, luggage, furniture, or other belongings. They can also move through walls to new areas in a home or building.

Where Would I Find Bed Bugs in My Home?

- In/near the bed — mattress seams, box springs, bed frames, head and foot boards, night stands
- In/on baseboards, wood moldings, furniture such as chairs, couches, or tables
- In/on curtains, clothing, or other fabric items that have folds or crevices
- Inside switch plates, outlets, electronics (phones, computers, televisions, etc.)
- Areas with lots of clutter

Do Bed Bugs Spread Disease?

Many studies have been done to find out if bed bugs are capable of spreading disease to people that are bitten. At this time, there is no scientific evidence that bed bugs spread disease to people.

Bed bug bites are usually painless. Some people may have skin reactions after being bitten. Mild reactions will usually go away without any treatment in one week.

After a bite occurs, it leaves an opening in the skin. Just like with any other scrape or cut, this opening makes it possible to get an infection at the bite site.

To reduce the risk of infection, it is important to keep the bite site clean until it heals.