

What are bed bugs?

Bed bugs are small, flat parasitic insects that feed solely on the blood of people and animals while they sleep. Bed bugs are reddish-brown in color, wingless, range from 1mm to 7mm (roughly the size of Lincoln's head on a penny), and can live several months without a blood meal.

Where are bed bugs found?

Bed bug infestations usually occur around or near the areas where people sleep. These areas include apartments, shelters, rooming houses, hotels, cruise ships, buses, trains, and dorm rooms. They hide during the day in places such as seams of mattresses, box springs, bed frames, headboards, dresser tables, inside cracks or crevices, behind wallpaper, or any other clutter or objects around a bed. Bed bugs have been shown to be able to travel over 100 feet in a night but tend to live within 8 feet of where people sleep.

Bed bugs have been found in five-star hotels and resorts, and their presence is not determined by the cleanliness of the living conditions where they are found.



Do bed bugs spread disease?

Bed bugs should not be considered as a medical or public health hazard. Bed bugs are not known to spread disease. Bed bugs can be an annoyance because their presence may cause itching and loss of sleep. Sometimes the itching can lead to excessive scratching that can sometimes increase the chance of a secondary skin infection.

What health risks do bed bugs pose?

A bed bug bite affects each person differently. Bite responses can range from an absence of any physical signs of the bite, to a small bite mark, to a serious allergic reaction. Bed bugs are not considered to be dangerous; however, an allergic reaction to several bites may need medical attention.

What are the signs and symptoms of a bed bug infestation?

One of the easiest ways to identify a bed bug infestation is by the tell-tale bite marks on the face, neck, arms, hands, or any other body parts while sleeping. However, these bite marks may take several days to develop in some people so it is important to look for other clues when determining if bed bugs have infested an area.

These signs include:

- the bed bugs' exoskeletons after molting,
- bed bugs in the fold of mattresses and sheets,
- rusty-colored blood spots due to their blood-filled fecal material that is excreted on the mattress or nearby furniture, and
- a sweet musty odor.



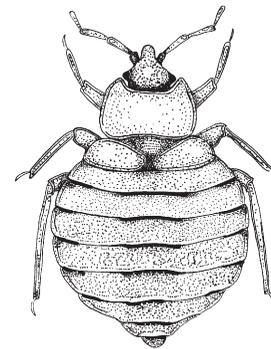
For more information on bedbugs, go to:

www.phd5.idaho.gov/Bedbugs

www.cdc.gov/parasites/bedbugs

www.epa.gov/pesticides/bedbugs

I
actual size



Adapted from a CDC publication and a University of California publication.
SCPHD: 04/2012

BED BUGS



South Central
Public Health District
Prevent. Promote. Protect.



How did I get bed bugs?

Bed bugs are experts at hiding. Their slim, flat bodies allow them to fit into the smallest of spaces and stay there for long periods of time, even without a blood meal. Bed bugs are usually transported from place to place as people travel. The bed bugs travel in the seams and folds of luggage, overnight bags, folded clothes, bedding, furniture, and anywhere else where they can hide. Most people do not realize they are transporting stow-away bed bugs as they travel from location to location, infecting areas as they travel.

Who is at risk for getting bed bugs?

Everyone is at risk for getting bed bugs when visiting an infected area. However, anyone who travels frequently and shares living and sleeping quarters where other people have previously slept has a higher risk of being bitten and or spreading a bed bug infestation.

How do I know if I've been bitten by a bed bug?

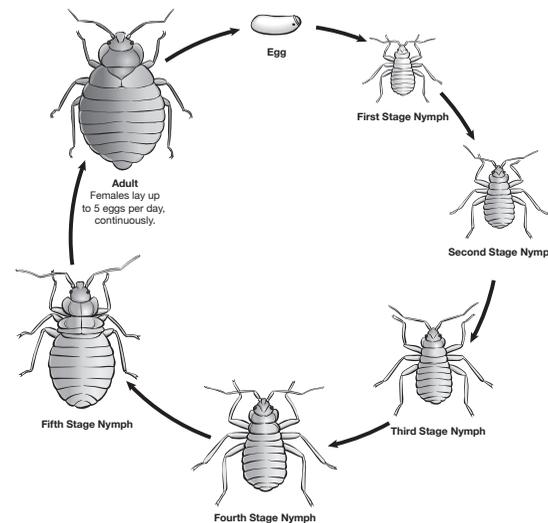
It is hard to tell if you've been bitten by a bed bug unless you find bed bugs or signs of infestation. When bed bugs bite, they inject an anesthetic and an anticoagulant that prevents a person from realizing they are being bitten. Most people do not realize they have been bitten until bite marks appear anywhere from one to several days after the initial bite. The bite marks are similar to that of a mosquito or a flea ~ a slightly swollen and red area that may itch and be irritating. The bite marks may be random or appear in a straight line. Other symptoms of bed bug bites include insomnia, anxiety, and skin problems that arise from profuse scratching of the bites.



How are bed bugs treated and prevented?

Bed bug bites usually do not pose a serious medical threat. The best way to treat a bite is to avoid scratching the area, apply antiseptic creams or lotions, and take an antihistamine. Bed bug infestations are commonly treated by insecticide spraying. If you suspect that you have an infestation, contact your landlord or professional pest control company that is experienced with treating bed bugs. The best way to prevent bed bugs is regular inspection for the signs of an infestation.

Life Cycle of a bed bug:



Getting rid of bed bugs

- Thoroughly vacuum—several times—carpets, baseboards, outlet boxes, seams of mattresses, and cloth covered furniture in all affected rooms. After vacuuming, remove the vacuum bag—place it in a plastic bag, seal, and discard. This should be done on the same day.
- Obtain Tempo Dust or a liquid Tempo Concentrate. Spray hiding places in furniture, bed frames, outlet boxes, and baseboards (they hide in the crack behind the baseboards) about every two weeks to kill emerging nymphs or as needed. If you use a liquid spray from concentrate, do not spray areas that water may damage.
- Obtain zipper mattress covers or the less expensive plastic shipping and storing bags and cover all affected mattresses and box springs. **Note:** If you have sprayed liquid spray in the seams of the mattress and box springs, allow them to dry thoroughly before placing them in the mattress covers to avoid mold problems. Make sure the openings in the plastic covers are well taped and sealed. Bed bugs can live up to a year without a blood meal. Leave the covers on the mattresses for 9-12 months. What makes the biggest difference beyond the use of chemicals is whether or not the person buys and applies a bedbug-proof mattress and box spring cover.
- All bedding, clothes, etc. can be washed and dried on medium or high heat. Heat kills bed bugs. Stuffed animals can also be put into the dryer on high heat to kill the critters.
- Remove the bottom fabric from couches and spray inside the couches and in all seams and crevices several times. Don't spray on the



outside fabric of the couch where people sit. In the evening, turn furniture upside down and spray; let them sit that way overnight and then turn them over in the morning.

- Obtain diatomaceous earth (DE) and generously sprinkle it along all baseboards, around beds and bed posts, across doorways (all carpeted), behind and under the couches, etc. The reason for spreading DE across doorways is to inhibit migration from one room to the next. (Do not use swimming pool DE!)
- Generously sprinkle regular table salt in the same areas.

Note: the DE sticks to the outside of their bodies and absorbs the wax layer that keeps them from losing their body moisture, the salt then desiccates them. Both of these substances are easily vacuumed up later. Leave these substances along the walls and around the edges of the bed for several months. This process can be repeated as needed.

You can be successful in getting rid of bed bugs, but it does take time and diligence. You can also hire a professional exterminator.

