

# BED BUGS

Know the Facts  
**PUBLIC HEALTH STRATEGY**  
Inspection, Prevention, Control

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT BED BUGS

*Bed bugs are parasites...*

that prefer to feed on the blood of humans. If people aren't available, they will feed on other warm-blooded animals, including birds, rodents, bats, and pets.



Adult

# Mature Bed Bug

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## Bed Bugs: Know the Facts

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## *What are bed bugs?*

**B**ed bugs cannot fly or jump. They

have a flattened oval shape, and are reddish and rusty brown in color.

Adults are about the size of an apple seed (1/4 – 3/8 inch long). Newly hatched nymphs are white or yellowish, resembling the adults – but smaller. Bed bugs eggs are white, about the size of a pinhead (1/10 inch long) and are found in crevices in clusters of ten to fifty eggs. Female bed bugs can lay up to five eggs a day and 500 during a lifetime.



**Size Comparison**



**Unfed      Fed**



**Eggs**

## **What do they look like?**

The common bed bug (*Cimex lectularius*) feeds on human blood. They are most often found near sleeping areas in the seams of mattresses, box springs, cracks and crevices in bed frames, and usually spread to gaps behind baseboards, pictures, wallpaper and electrical outlets. They can hitchhike into a home on used furniture, clothing or other items brought from infested areas.

# *Can bed bugs cause disease?*

**B**ed bugs are not known to transmit disease. Their bites are painless and typically happen at night while you sleep. Bed bugs feed for about three to ten minutes before crawling off to a sheltered crevice. They will bite anywhere on the body, but especially on exposed areas such as the face, neck, arms and hands.

Some people are hardly aware they have been bitten, but others suffer an allergic reaction and may develop swelling similar to those associated with mosquito or flea bites. The bites may itch for up to two weeks before healing, so resist the urge to scratch to prevent a secondary, bacterial infection. Wash the bites with soap and water to reduce the risk of infection.



## How long does the reaction last?



## *Inspection*

To locate bed bugs and their hiding places a thorough inspection of the premises is necessary so that cleaning efforts and insecticide treatments can be focused. Inspection efforts should concentrate on the mattress, box springs, and bed frame, as well as cracks and crevices that the bed bugs may hide in during the day or when digesting a blood meal. Sites include window and door frames, floor cracks, carpet tack boards, baseboards, electrical boxes, furniture, pictures, wall hangings, drapery pleats, loosened wall paper, cracks in plaster, and ceiling moldings.

In hotels, apartments, and other multiple family type dwellings, it is advisable to also inspect adjoining units since bed bugs can travel through wall spaces into adjoining rooms.

**Where do I  
find bed bugs?**



## *Inspection*

Unless an infestation is severe, you may not see bed bugs crawling out in the open. They prefer to hide in sheltered areas until they come out to feed, but you can find signs of bed bug infestations...

Examine the room thoroughly, especially the wall, baseboard, headboard and furniture near the bed. Use a flashlight to look behind and underneath furniture and woodwork.

Check pillowcases, sheets, boxsprings and mattresses for their feces which looks like dark spots – as if someone touched a dark magic marker to the fabric. Fecal spots, egg shells, and shed skins may be found in the vicinity of their hiding places. An offensive, sweet, musty odor from their scent glands may be detected when bed bug infestations are severe.



**How do I know if I have bed bugs in my home?**

## *Prevention*

**D**o not bring or allow infested items into your home. It is important to carefully inspect clothing and baggage of travelers; inspect secondhand beds, bedding, new and used furniture before bringing it inside by examining tight spaces along seams, around buttons and under cushions. When traveling, look for evidence of bed bugs, such as fecal spots on mattresses, before unpacking.

Minimize clutter to reduce the number of bed bug hiding places. Caulk cracks and crevices in the building interior and also repair or screen openings to exclude birds, bats, and rodents that can serve as alternate hosts for bed bugs. Inspect pets' bedding (cats and dogs). Bed bugs will bite animals living in the house.



**How can I prevent a bed bug infestation?**

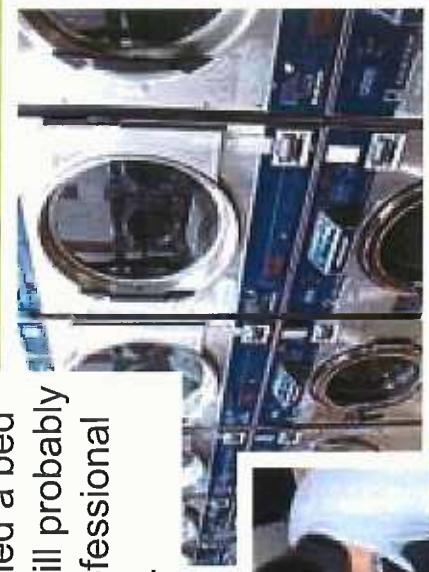
*“Awareness is the key to prevention.”*

# *Control*

To get rid of bed bugs, you must remove clutter such as pictures, books and clothing from the infested area so there are fewer places for the bugs to hide. Vacuuming will remove some of the bed bugs, but the eggs are glued in place and can't be easily removed by vacuuming. Concentrate on mattress seams and around any tufts or buttons. Vacuum wherever your inspection revealed the presence of bed bugs – furniture, box springs, bed frames, floors and baseboards. Remove the vacuum bag immediately; place it in a sealed plastic bag and dispose of it outdoors.

Infested items such as clothing, shoes, bedding and blankets can be placed in a clothes dryer on high heat for 20 minutes to kill bed bugs and their eggs. Mattresses and box springs should be enclosed in a bed bug-proof zippered cover to kill the bugs inside. The cover should remain in place for more than one year because bed bugs can survive a long time without feeding.

**T**here is no magic bullet to use against bed bugs. Once you have identified a bed bug infestation, you will probably need the help of a professional pest control specialist.



## **How do I get rid of bed bugs?**

# *Control*

Once you have taken all the steps of inspecting and preventing bed bugs, you must control the infestation until there are no more signs of bed bugs.

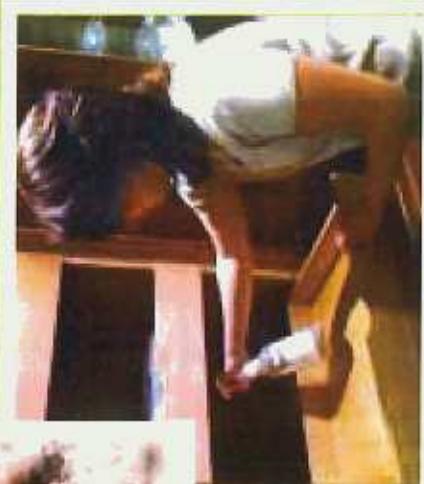
- Launder bedding and clothing and dry at the hottest dryer setting for 20 minutes to kill all stages of bed bugs. Store in plastic containers.
- Thoroughly vacuum infested areas. This includes the mattress, box springs, headboards, upholstered furniture, car and pet bedding. Vacuum every couple days. Bag the vacuum cleaner bag and take it to the outside trash container.
- Eliminate clutter in infested areas to reduce bed bug hiding places and make treatment more effective.
- Repair cracks and crevices. Eliminate harborage areas by filling in cracks, removing torn wallpaper, and sealing joints and cracks.
- Report a suspected bed bug infestation to your landlord.



## How do I control bed bugs?

# *Control*

- Work with a licensed pest control operator. Generally, pesticides will need to be applied along with non-chemical control to get rid of the bed bugs.
- Encase mattress and box springs with bed bug proof covers.
- DO NOT SPRAY BEDDING WITH INSECTICIDE UNLESS DIRECTED BY THE PRODUCT LABEL
- DO NOT USE BUG BOMBS



If you suspect you have a bed bug infestation, contact Public Health  
- Dayton & Montgomery County

225-4460 For Motel / Hotel Complaints

225-4362 For Residential Complaints  
(Outside City of Dayton)

**Who do I call  
about bed bugs?**



117 South Main Street • Dayton, Ohio 45422  
[www.phdmc.org](http://www.phdmc.org)  
[www.odh.ohio.gov](http://www.odh.ohio.gov)