



## BED BUG FACT SHEET

### What are bed bugs?

Adult bed bugs look similar to a tick and have flat, copper colored bodies. Young bed bugs (nymphs) are nearly colorless and very small. You can see adult bed bugs, nymphs (immature bed bugs), and eggs with the naked eye. An adult bed bug is about the size on an apple seed and a nymph is about the size of a sesame seed.

Bed bugs are not associated with filth or unsanitary conditions. However, houses and rooms full of clutter offer bed bugs more hiding places.

### Where are bed bugs found?

Bed bugs are most often found around areas where people sleep or rest. Small bloodstains from crushed bed bugs or dark brown spots from bed bug droppings may be evident on mattresses. Because bed bug nymphs shed their skin several times, “empty shells” may also be evident.

### Why don't people see bed bugs?

Bed bugs are most active between midnight and 3 am. They are rarely active during daylight hours, and only come out when attracted by the warmth and carbon dioxide released from a body at rest. Because of their small flat bodies, they can hide in the cracks and crevices of mattresses, bedding, furniture, and draperies, and are difficult to spot without careful inspection.

### Are bed bugs dangerous?

Bed bugs do not transmit disease. However, bed bug bites can cause large itchy welts on the skin. A person's reaction to insect bites is an immune response and can vary widely from person to person. The bites themselves are usually painless and rarely awaken a sleeping person. Some people will react immediately to bed bugs bites, while for others it may take a few days.

### How long do bed bugs live?

The typical life span of a bed bug is between 10 months and a year. In general, bed bugs seek a meal of blood every 4 or 5 days. However, they can survive for weeks to a year without eating.

### Pesticides/Insecticides use

Take care to **read all labels** before applying any pesticides. Do not apply the product unless you understand all directions. Do not apply the product unless you have proper training or certification.

Never apply pesticide or insecticide to a mattress or a surface that would come in direct contact with a person unless the label instructions state that the product should be used in this manner.

If you seek professional help, request a written plan from the pest control operator that explains what they will do in your home and what products they will use.



### Prevention at the Laundromat:

- Do not transport laundry in cloth bags unless you plan to wash and dry them. Instead, use white, plastic baskets that are easy to inspect when they are empty.
- Do not set your laundry basket on the floor or on top of the washer, but put it back in your car when it is not in use. If you do not have a car, place the basket on top of the washer and inspect it thoroughly before putting clean laundry back into it.
- Do not set your laundry basket anywhere near the seating areas or trashcans.
- Inspect any chairs in the seating area of the Laundromat before sitting on them.

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- Inspect the table used for folding laundry before placing your clean clothes on it. Better yet, fold your clean laundry at home.

## Preventing Bed Bugs from Spreading

- Inspect all used furniture before bringing it into your home. Avoid used mattresses.
- Before beginning pest control efforts to rid a home of bed bugs, confirm the identity of the pest.
- If you are renting, contact your property owner immediately to get a solution implemented quickly.
- Wash bedding in hot water and then dry on a high heat setting on a weekly basis. Place pillows and other non-washable items in the dryer for 20 minutes on high heat. Keep bedding from touching the floor.
- Mattresses and box springs can be enclosed in a zippered mattress cover. Seal any tears with duct tape. Trapped bugs will eventually die. This should be left in place for a year or more as bed bugs can live for long periods without feeding.
- Remove clutter as it can also hide bed bugs.
- Remove drawers from furniture and clean, and turn furniture over to inspect and clean.
- Scrub infested surfaces (mattress, box spring, bed frame, couch, etc.) with a stiff brush to remove eggs.
- Vacuum mattress, carpet, fabric drapes, and upholstered furniture often (paying special attention to cracks and crevices). Dispose of the vacuum contents carefully in a plastic bag that you can seal and remove from your home immediately.
- Affected item(s) may be discarded, although new ones may become infested if bed bugs are still present.
- When disposing of an infested item, destroy the item and mark as infested with bed bugs so it will not be acquired by someone else, infecting their residence.

- Seal cracks in plaster, holes in walls, and loose wallpaper to eliminate hiding places for bed bugs.
- Hire a pest control service to routinely treat the home and prevent a bed bug infestation.

## Prevention When at a Hotel

- Pull back all of the bedding at the head of the bed near the headboard to look for bed bugs or their fecal stains on the mattress.
- Check the seams of the mattress and the box springs.
- Do not place your suitcase on the spare bed
- Place luggage on luggage rack or in bathroom.
- Keep your clothing in your bag, do not unpack and place your belongings in drawers
- Place your shoes in an open area, not under the bed or in the closet
- Upon returning home, unpack your luggage immediately in some location other than the bedroom (bathroom, garage, mudroom, foyer etc.). Launder all clothing.
- If you have reason to believe that your bag did encounter bed bugs, place your suitcase in a plastic bag. If the weather is warm, the bag with the suitcase can be put out in the hot sun or in the hot car for a day.
- Although it is not always practical, using a soft bag like a duffel style bag or gym bag when traveling will allow you to put the bag in the dryer when you get home.
- Carefully examine any secondhand furniture, bedding, or beds before bringing home

**For additional information on bedbugs go to:**

<http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/bedbugs/>

<http://www.epa.gov/opp00001/bedbugs/>

<http://www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases/0,1607,7-186--147759--,00.html>