

Bed Bugs

What are Bed Bugs?

Bed bugs are small, flat insects that feed on the blood of people and animals as they sleep.

Bed bugs do not fly or jump. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, bed bugs usually live within 8 feet of where people sleep.

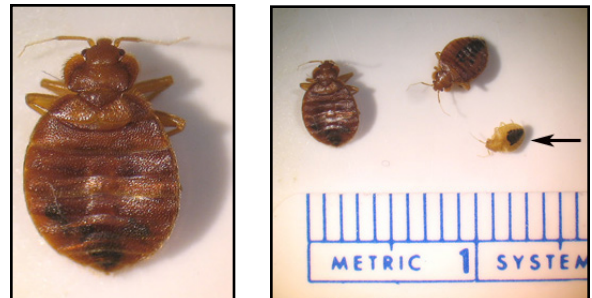
Bed bugs are reddish-brown, wingless and oval-shaped. They are not known to carry or spread disease.

Bed bugs hide during the day. After they feed at night, they return to their hiding places. Having bed bugs does not mean that you are dirty or do not have a clean house.

How are Bed Bugs Found?

You may have bed bugs if you:

- have bite marks on your body. Bed bug bites look like other bug bites. (You may not get red bite marks from bed bugs.)
- can see the bugs in the folds of the mattress or on other parts of the bed. They can hide in small cracks or seams in the box spring, frame or headboard. They can also be found in small cracks in the walls and items around the bed, such as dressers, tables or clutter.
- see small reddish spots on the mattress or areas by the bed (from the bed bugs' feces)
- see the exoskeletons (skeleton on the outside) of the bed bugs.



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

(Left) Adult bed bugs are small and reddish-brown in color. (Right) The bug by the arrow is a young bed bug.

The bites may not bother you or they may cause itching (like a mosquito bite). Bite marks can show up many days after the bites took place. Try to avoid scratching the bites so you don't get an infection.

Call your doctor if you have a reaction beyond the typical small, red, itchy bites of bed bugs. Symptoms to call about include severe itching, blisters or hives.

Where Do Bed Bugs Come From?

Bed bugs are found all across the world. They can travel in luggage, clothes and on items but not directly on people.

You may be at risk for getting bed bugs if you travel, have slept in a bed where the bugs are present, visit an area known to have bed bugs, or get used furniture that has not been inspected for bed bugs.

(over)

How are Bed Bugs Treated?

- Call a professional pest control company if you find bed bugs.
- Do not attempt to fix the problem yourself using sprays and chemicals sold at local hardware and home stores. They can be hazardous, require special training to use, and not all are effective against bed bugs.

How Can You Prevent Bringing Bed Bugs From Home to Other Places?

- Run your clothing on a full cycle of high heat in a clothes dryer and put them on right away.
- Take the smallest number of personal items with you.
- For items you must bring with you, place them in a tightly sealed plastic bag when you are not using them. These items include purses, coats, other clothing or other personal items.
- If there is concern for bed bugs at home and you are admitted to the hospital, your belongings will be bagged and sent home with family members.

Whom to Contact for More Information

- bedbugs.umn.edu
- cdc.gov/parasites/bedbugs
- your local pest control company

Information adapted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.