

Preventing Bed Bug Infestation

- **Never touch furniture that has been discarded on the curb or by a dumpster.** *It might be infested.*
- **Carefully inspect any secondhand furniture you are considering bringing into your home.** *Check in the seams, under cushions, by the tag, and in joints and cracks for evidence of bed bugs.*
- **Check hotel rooms for evidence of bed bugs before you settle in.** *Avoid placing luggage on the bed; use a luggage rack placed several inches away from the wall instead. Of course, inspect the luggage rack before using it.*
- **Be aware in public places.** *Places where bed bugs may be picked up include: public transportation or airplanes, nursing homes, movie theater seats, in laundromats, or any other place where many different people spend time.*
- **Keep clutter in your home to a minimum.** *If bed bugs come in, you will be able to spot them sooner rather than later. Bed bugs hide and multiply in cluttered conditions.*
- **Bed bugs can travel on clothing and personal items.** *If you ever suspect you have been exposed to bed bugs, immediately launder your clothing on a high temperature setting and put it in a hot dryer for at least 30 minutes. Seal purses or other personal belongings in plastic bags.*
- **After a trip, it is a good idea to visually inspect luggage and clothing before putting it away in your home.** *If possible, wash all clothing before putting it away.*

Resources

The following resources were used to create this informational pamphlet. If you would like more information on bed bugs, please visit the web sites.

- Cooper, Richard. Bed bugs 101. Retrieved from <http://www.bedbugcentral.com/bedbugs101/index.cfm>
- New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Bed bugs: Resources, information, and management. Retrieved from <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/bedbugs/html/home/home.shtml>
- Pellitteri, Phil. (2008). Bed bugs in Wisconsin: Diagnostic lab note. Retrieved from <http://www.entomology.wisc.edu/diaglab/labnotes/bedbug.pdf>

Conclusion

Please share the information you have learned with family and friends. This brochure isn't meant to worry you or make you uncomfortable; its purpose is to share important information about preventing bed bug infestations. If you will be traveling and would like a wallet size information card about bed bug identification, we have some available in the Housing Partnership office.



Phone: (920) 731-6644

www.housing-partnership.org



Guide to identification & prevention of bed bugs



Photo from www.nyc.gov (New York City Health Dept.)

From left to right: an adult bed bug that hasn't fed recently; an adult bed bug that just fed; a young bed bug

Purpose

Bed bug infestations have become more common in recent years in the U.S. and the rest of the world. Infestations disrupt daily life and are costly to treat. It is important for people to learn about bed bugs and how to prevent them from spreading. Education and awareness will help stop the spread of bed bugs.

History

Bed bugs were common in the U.S. before World War II, but their numbers were significantly decreased in part due to the use of strong pesticides like DDT. A number of factors likely contributed to the recent increase in bed bug numbers some of which include: the disuse of pesticides like DDT; changes in pest management practices; increasing resistance of bed bugs to pesticides; and increased international travel.



Appearance of bed bugs

Bed bugs are small wingless insects. A newly hatched bed bug is semi-transparent, light tan in color, and the about size of a poppy seed. Adult bed bugs are reddish-brown, flat, oval, and about the size of an apple seed. The appearance of a bed bug changes slightly after it feeds; the body will be longer and often darker in color after feeding.

Where bed bugs gather

In the early stages of an infestation, bed bugs tend to be found in the mattress, box spring, headboard, and upholstered furniture. If the infestation progresses, bed bugs may cluster behind baseboards, in crevices, behind hanging pictures, and so on.

Feeding & bites

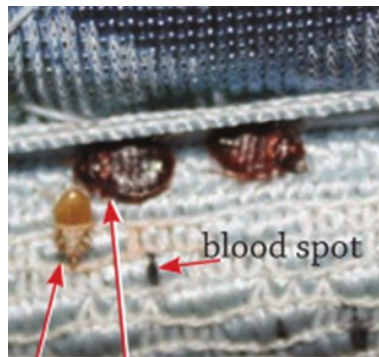
Bed bugs feed at night on human blood. They are attracted to warmth and carbon dioxide. Bed bugs usually feed for 3-10 minutes every 5-10 days. Bed bug bites are usually painless. Bed bugs have not been linked to the spread of disease among humans.

Some people's bodies do not react to bed bug bites at all, and other people experience allergic reactions. Reddish welts may appear that look similar to mosquito bites. Bed bug bites usually appear in clusters and often itch. Bite marks may not appear for several days after exposure.

Signs of bed bugs

Besides seeing a bed bug, there are several ways to tell that bed bugs may be present:

- **Appearance of bed bug bites on the skin.** *This is often the first sign of bed bugs; however, keep in mind that not everyone reacts to bed bug bites.*
- **Black or rusty colored spots on box springs, mattresses, bedding, walls, etc.** *This is bed bug fecal matter – digested blood.*



shed skin bed bug on mattress

Signs of bed bugs (cont.)

- **Eggs.** *Bed bug eggs are about the size of a grain of sugar and are best seen with a magnifying glass. They are elongated, capsule-shaped, and yellowish or white in color.*
- **A sickly sweet smell.** *When an infestation is very bad, a sickly sweet smell may be noticed.*



Treatment

Treatment of bed bugs is difficult and must be handled by a pest management professional. Treatment may include use of pesticides and raising the temperature of the unit very high in order to kill the bugs. All washable items need to be laundered in hot water and dried in a hot dryer. It may be necessary to use mattress covers which seal the mattress for at least a year so that any bed bugs in the mattress starve and die. Thorough cleaning of the home before treatment is important because treatment isn't effective if there's a lot of clutter. Multiple inspections and treatments may be necessary.

If you suspect that your unit has bed bugs, you must inform Housing Partnership immediately. We will call a Pest Management Professional to check for bed bugs and begin treatment if necessary. Under no circumstance should you try to control a bed bug problem on your own. The sooner a bed bug problem is identified, the easier it is to treat.