

# Bed Bugs

**Bed bugs are small, wingless insects that can feed on sleeping humans at night.** These nocturnal insects hide along seams of mattresses, in box springs, or in cracks and crevices near sleeping areas. Eliminating an infestation requires removing or treating all infested material and monitoring to be sure bed bugs are gone.

## Bed bug identification and biology

- ◆ **Adults are small (about 1/5 inch), oval, and rusty red. Nymphs, or immature bed bugs, are smaller and lighter colored.**
- ◆ **Bed bugs feed only on blood and must have one blood meal prior to molting to the next, larger nymphal stage.**
- ◆ **Adults can feed every few days but can survive many months without food.**

## What are associated health problems?

- ◆ **Bed bug feeding is painless. Victims usually remain asleep.**
- ◆ **Areas around bites may redden, swell, and itch. Some people have no reaction.**
- ◆ **Bed bugs are not known to spread diseases, but scratching bites can lead to infections.**

## How does a bed bug infestation start?

- ◆ **People can carry bed bugs on luggage, clothes, bedding, furniture, or other objects and may pick them up in hotels.**
- ◆ **Hotels, homeless shelters, furnished apartments, and dormitories are most at risk.**
- ◆ **Second-hand mattresses and furniture can be a source.**

## Detecting bed bugs.

- ◆ **Look for bed bugs, their dark fecal spots, and light-brown shed skins.**
- ◆ **Focus on mattresses, box springs, bed frames, and areas around the bed.**
- ◆ **Bed bugs like to hide. Remove bedding. Look in cracks, crevices, and holes. Turn furniture upside down and dismantle frames if necessary.**
- ◆ **Use a flashlight and magnifying glass.**

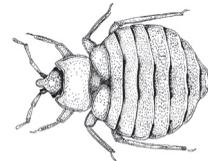


**Remove or treat all infested materials as soon as you detect bed bugs.**

- ◆ **Vacuum along mattress seams, baseboards, and other areas.**
- ◆ **Wash all bedding and clothing in hot (120°F) water and dry in a hot dryer.**
- ◆ **Consider steam cleaning.**
- ◆ **If possible, replace infested mattresses.**
- ◆ **Specially-designed mattress encasements may be helpful.**

**Serious infestations may require insecticide treatment.**

- ◆ **Hire an experienced pest control professional. They have access to the most effective products.**
- ◆ **Apply insecticides to cracks, crevices, baseboards, and bed frames but not directly to mattresses or bedding. Use special dusts for wall voids and other out-of-the-way spots.**
- ◆ **Insecticides alone will not control bed bugs. Remove infested materials, and seal hiding spots.**
- ◆ **Inspect after treatment to be sure bugs are gone.**



Adult bed bug (1/5 inch).

**Minimize the use of pesticides that pollute our waterways. Use nonchemical alternatives or less toxic pesticide products whenever possible. Read product labels carefully and follow instructions on proper use, storage, and disposal.**

For more information about managing pests, contact your local Cooperative Extension office listed in your phone book or at [www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension/index.html](http://www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension/index.html). If you have a question about choosing a pesticide, contact the National Pesticide Information Center at **1-800-858-7378** or via e-mail at [npic@ace.orst.edu](mailto:npic@ace.orst.edu).

University of California  
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[www.StopPests.org](http://www.StopPests.org)

**What you use in your home affects the health of those around you!**