



What Are Bed Bugs?

Bed bugs are small, flat insects that feed on our blood, typically at night, while we are sleeping. Adult bed bugs are about 1/4 of an inch long, have flat, rusty-red-colored oval bodies, and look like an apple seed. They feed for about 3-10 minutes and their bodies swell and become bright red. During the bed bug life cycle, a female can lay 200-400 eggs depending on food supply and temperature. Bed bugs don't fly, but can quickly walk across floors, walls, and other surfaces.



Can I get a disease from bed bugs?

No, there are no known cases of infectious disease transmitted by bed bug bites. However, some people are more sensitive to the bites and develop itchy, red welts. Scratching the bites can lead to infection. Bed bugs may also affect a person's mental health. Anxiety, insomnia and irritability have been reported in some people.

How do I prevent bed bugs from entering my home?

People often bring bed bugs into their homes via infested luggage, furniture, bedding or clothing. Bed bugs can hitch a ride on items purchased second-hand, or from furniture and bedding that is delivered to your home. Bed bugs may also travel between apartments through small crevices, cracks, and ventilation ducts in walls and floors.

- Regular house cleaning, including vacuuming your mattress, can help to prevent an infestation.
- Clean up clutter to help reduce the number of places bed bugs can hide.
- Wash clothing and inspect luggage immediately after returning from a trip.
- Inspect used furniture for bed bugs before bringing it into your home.
- Never bring discarded bed frames, mattresses, box springs or upholstered furniture into your home.

How do I know if my home has bed bugs?

Itchy swollen bites may be the first sign of a bed bug problem. However, these itchy bites can take as long as 14 days to develop in some people, so it's important to look for other clues if you are concerned about an infestation. Bed bugs typically infest mattresses, box springs, bed frames and couches. You may be able to find them hiding within the cracks and crevices of beds, furniture, floors and walls.

Bed bugs often leave evidence of small dark stains (fecal droppings) and rusty red spots (bloodstains) on bedding sheets, mattresses, and other areas they hide in or travel along. Heavy bed bug infestations can cause a sweet, musty smell.

If you suspect a bed bug problem, it's important to first confirm that you really have bed bugs. Contact a pest control company for bed bug identification help.



How do I get rid of bed bugs?

The best way to control bed bugs is to use an integrated pest management approach, which combines a variety of control techniques that pose the least risk to human health and the environment. The use of pesticides is just one part of the potential control strategy for bed bugs.

1. Confirm that you have bed bugs. Contact a pest control company for bed bug identification help.
2. Use your vacuum's nozzle attachment to capture the bed bugs and their eggs. Vacuum all seams and crevices on your mattress, bed frame, baseboards, and any other objects close to the bed or furniture in the home found to be harboring bed bugs. It is essential to vacuum daily and immediately place the vacuum's contents into a sealed plastic bag and throw it away in an outdoor garbage can.
3. Wash all your linens in hot water and place them in a hot dryer for at least 20 minutes.
4. Cover your mattress, box spring and pillows with a certified bed bug cover encasement.
5. Remove all unnecessary clutter.

6. Seal cracks and crevices between baseboards, on wood bed frames, floors and walls with caulking. Repair or remove peeling wallpaper, tighten loose light switch covers, and seal any openings where pipes, wires or other utilities come into your home. Pay special attention to apartments or rooms that share a wall — bed bugs can move through extremely small gaps to infest new areas.
7. Monitor nightly to catch the bed bugs. Trapping provides evidence of bed bugs, but it shouldn't be used as the sole method of control because it probably won't catch all the bed bugs. You can purchase a trap or make your own, see UNL Extension's Do-it-Yourself Bed Bug Trap at lancaster.unl.edu/pest/resources/338BedBugTrap.pdf.
8. Closely examine any items that you are moving around in your home or are bringing in. If you throw away infested items, make sure that no one else will want to use them again — cut holes in upholstery or attach a sign to it saying, "Infested with Bed Bugs."
9. Contact a professional pest control company to assist you with these control steps and to see if pesticides or other bed bug control strategies should be included. Use the least toxic pesticide product available and follow the label's instructions.
10. Never use pesticides intended for outdoor use inside your home. Bug bombs, or total release foggers are not effective in controlling bed bugs. Bed bug infestations can be difficult to control, but don't resort to improperly using pesticides. Serious health risks can occur when pesticides are used improperly.

Hiring a Pest Control Company

Consider hiring a pest control company, especially if there appears to be a significant bed bug infestation. Choose a company that is licensed and insured, has experience controlling bed bugs, can provide references, and uses integrated pest management techniques.

Resources

General Information

How to Identify a Bed Bug Infestation
Virginia Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services
vdacs.virginia.gov/pdf/bb-identify1.pdf

Bed Bugs | Rutgers University
njaes.rutgers.edu/bedbug/

Bed Bugs | University of Kentucky
entomology.ca.uky.edu/ef636

Bed Bugs | Michigan Dept. of Community Health
michigan.gov/documents/MDCH_Bedbugs_Factsheet_165671_7.pdf

Let's Beat the Bed Bug | University of Minnesota
bedbugs.umn.edu/

Bed Bugs: Get Them Out and Keep Them Out | United States Environmental Protection Agency
epa.gov/bedbugs

Bed Bugs | CDC
cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/Topics/bedbugs.htm

Bed Bugs | Washington Dept. of Health
doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/Pests/BedBugs

Insects and Rodents | SRHD
srhd.org/programs-and-services/animal-insect-disease-prevention/insects-rodents

Bed Bugs in the House or Apartment

Bed Bugs: How to Protect Yourself and Your Home | Virginia Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services
vdacs.virginia.gov/pdf/bb-book.pdf

How to Identify a Bed Bug Infestation | Virginia Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services
vdacs.virginia.gov/pdf/bb-identify1.pdf

Bed Bug Action Plan for Apartments | Virginia Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services
vdacs.virginia.gov/pdf/bb-apt1.pdf

Let's Beat the Bed Bug | University of Minnesota
www.bedbugs.umn.edu

Bed Bugs in the Workplace

Let's Beat the Bed Bug | University of Minnesota
bedbugs.umn.edu/

"Encountering at Work," Bed Bug Prevention Methods | Virginia Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services
vdacs.virginia.gov/pdf/bb-prevention1.pdf

Bed Bugs in Medical Facilities

Response to Bed Bugs in Medical Facilities | National Pest Management Association
pestworld.org/media/560218/bbprotocol-medical.pdf

Guidelines for Social Service Providers Who Conduct Home Visits
University of Minnesota
bedbugs.umn.edu/

Bed Bugs: Emergency Facilities and Patient Transport | Virginia Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services
vdacs.virginia.gov/pdf/bb-emt1.pdf

Bed Bug Action Plan for Home Health Care and Social Workers | Virginia Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services
vdacs.virginia.gov/pdf/bb-healthcare1.pdf

Treatment

Bed Bug Treatment – What to Expect
Virginia Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services
vdacs.virginia.gov/pdf/bb-expect1.pdf

Bed Bugs are Back | Pest World
pestworld.org/news-hub/pest-articles/bed-bugs-are-back-what-you-need-to-know/