



BED BUGS were once a common public health pest problem worldwide that declined in incidence through the mid 1900's. Recently bed bugs have undergone a dramatic resurgence and there are worldwide reports of increasing numbers of infestations. Bed bugs are great travelers, they are readily transported via luggage, clothing, bedding and furniture.

Bed bugs are small insects that feed on the blood of mammals and birds. Adult bed bugs are oval, flattened (nearly as flat as a sheet of paper), straw-colored to reddish-brown, and wingless insects approximately 1/4" to 3/8" long. After feeding they look like a different insect - larger, more cigar shaped, and dark red. They are visible to the naked eye, but often hide in cracks and crevices. When bed bugs feed, their bodies swell and become a brighter red. In homes, bed bugs feed mostly on the blood of humans, usually at night when people are sleeping.

Bed bug bites are typically painless and rarely awaken a sleeping person. They can produce itchy red bumps or welts on the skin. Bed bugs tend to bite all over the body, especially on the areas that are exposed while we sleep, such as the face, neck, shoulders, arms and hands.

The typical life span of a bed bug is 10 months to a little over one year. They can survive for up to six months without feeding.

Although bed bugs are a nuisance to people, they are not known to spread disease.

Shimmery shed skins, eggshells and bloodstains on linens are signs of an infestation. The most effective management of bed bugs is a combination approach that includes BOTH cleaning, disinfecting and removal of contaminated materials AND the use of a pest control professional.

WHERE DO BED BUGS HIDE?

Examine rooms thoroughly, moving in a logical pattern, using a flashlight to inspect dark or shadowed areas. Bed bugs can hide in:

- ✦ seams, creases, tufts and folds of the mattress and box spring
- ✦ cracks in the bed frame and head board
- ✦ underneath chairs, couches, beds and dustcovers
- ✦ between the cushions of upholstered furniture
- ✦ underneath area rugs and the edges of carpets
- ✦ between the folds of drapery or curtains
- ✦ in the drawers of night stands or dressers
- ✦ behind the baseboards and electric switch plates
- ✦ around door and window casings
- ✦ under loose wallpaper, paintings, posters
- ✦ in cracks in the plaster
- ✦ in piles of books, papers, boxes, and other clutter near sleeping areas

CLEAN, DISINFECT, AND REMOVE

- ✦ Thoroughly clean all bedding, linens, curtains, rugs, carpets, and clothes. To kill bed bugs, wash items in hot water and use the highest dryer setting.
- ✦ Vacuum mattresses, bed frame, floorboards, any furniture and carpets carefully. Remove all visible dust. After vacuuming, immediately place the cleaner bag in a plastic bag, seal it tightly, and throw the bag away in an outdoor container.
- ✦ Wash the whole area and all items with soap and a disinfectant (1/2 cup of bleach to a gallon of water).
- ✦ Throw away and replace infested box springs.

- ◆ Cover mattresses with a waterproof zippered cover for at least one year. These covers often say “allergen rated,” or “for dust mites.” First scrub the mattress seams with a stiff brush to dislodge bed bugs and any eggs.
- ◆ Remove all clutter from bedrooms. Place in a plastic garbage bag, seal it tightly, and throw it away. If you need to save any of the items, make sure they stay sealed for up to a year.
- ◆ Repair any cracks in plaster and all loosened wallpaper and wallboards, especially in bedrooms.

Usually a thorough cleaning of the whole area and all items in it must be done ***more than once*** because eggs are easily missed, or bugs may be well hidden during the cleaning process.

After thorough cleaning, move the bed away from walls so it does not touch them. You may want to coat the bed legs for 3 or 4 inches with something like petroleum jelly to prevent bugs from crawling up into the bed. Remove dust covers, and keep bed covers and blankets up off the floor.

To discourage repeat infestations maintain good housekeeping practices and periodically inspect for possible habitats such as cracks and crevices.

USE A PEST CONTROL PROFESSIONAL

- ◆ Landlords must hire a licensed exterminator/pest control professional for any bed bug or other insect problem in a rental property.
- ◆ Hire an exterminator/pest control professional licensed by the New Jersey State Department of Environmental Protection to first evaluate what type of pest is present, and then to exterminate them. A careful inspection will identify all possible hiding places within infested and adjoining rooms. An approved insecticide will be applied once all likely sources have been identified.
- ◆ Tenants and homeowners who choose to apply a pesticide should follow these precautions:
 - ✧ Only use pesticides clearly labeled as intended for bed bug extermination. Never use a cockroach or ant spray, or any other pesticide that does not list bed bugs on the label.
 - ✧ Make sure you read, understand and follow the instructions on the pesticide’s label. Never purchase or use a product without a manufacturer’s label and never buy pesticides from a street vendor.
 - ✧ Only spray pesticides on mattresses or sofas if the label says it is approved for that use.
 - ✧ Do not spray pesticides in areas where children are present, or in areas where you prepare or eat food.
 - ✧ Wear gloves when applying pesticides and wash your hands after you take off your gloves.
 - ✧ Do not use insect bombs or foggers in your home. These products can spread hazardous chemicals throughout your home.
- ◆ If an approved spray (for mattresses) is applied to treat a bed:
 - ✧ Spray the slats, springs and frame. Apply enough spray to wet thoroughly. Be sure to treat any crevices where bed bugs may hide.
 - ✧ Spray a light mist to the entire mattress. Open seams, tufts and folds. Material should be thoroughly dry before use. *Only use a spray labeled for application to mattresses.*