

Bedbugs

What are bedbugs?

Bedbugs (*Cimex lectularius*) are tiny flat brown insects about 5 mm long. They do not fly or jump. But like the rhyme, they do bite! They are most active at night and prefer the bedroom where they can find a sleeping host. They were a common nuisance in the United States until the mid 1900's when powerful pesticides like DDT were introduced. But when those pesticides were banned in 1972, bedbugs began a quiet resurgence. Travel abroad is also more common which gives them plenty of opportunity to hitchhike back to the U.S. from locations around the world, hidden in luggage, clothing, pillows, briefcases, backpacks, purses, boxes and other belongings. They are known to survive without a "blood meal" for a year or more.



Do bedbugs cause disease?

No, bedbugs are primarily a nuisance. Itchy "bug bites" are usually the only manifestation of their presence. Hydrocortisone or Benadryl is usually the only treatment needed, if any.

How can I tell if I have been bitten by a bedbug?

They are nocturnal feeders which tend to bite their hosts at night, classically in a cluster of 3 bites referred to as "breakfast, lunch, and dinner". Most of the time, however, the bites appear as red itchy bumps similar to any other bug bite. Thus, looking at the appearance of the bite is seldom a way to diagnose this pest.

Are there other ways to find out if bedbugs are in my residence?

Yes, they tend to hide in mattresses (tufting, under seam tape on the edges), box springs, bed frames, floor cracks, wood trim around windows and floors, furniture upholstery, peeling wallpaper, and other objects adjacent to the bed. Dark brown reddish spots can sometimes be found on the bed linens or mattress. However, many other kinds of small bugs are frequently mistaken to be bedbugs so it is best to have them identified by an experienced exterminator.

I think I have bedbugs, now what?

DO contact your RA/hall director or landlord and let them know of your concern so that they can call an exterminator to investigate the possibility thoroughly.

DO NOT move to your friend's room/apartment, motel, or other residence. The bedbugs will likely accompany you and your belongings, resulting in spreading the pests to your friends and family. They will not thank you for this! Moving items out of the bedroom will also spread the pest to the other rooms in your residence. Refrain from any of these responses until the exterminator has a chance to confirm the bedbugs presence. Then follow the exterminator's instructions regarding beds, clothing, furniture, and other items in the room.

DO NOT attempt to treat your bed, bedroom, or anything else with store bought pesticides. The bugs need to be identified by an expert and treated by a competent exterminator.

Can I prevent bedbugs from entering my living space?

Used furniture, particularly mattresses, bed frames, and upholstered furniture pose the greatest risk of harboring these pests. Think carefully before acquiring these items. Even new furniture may become exposed and contaminated with bedbugs if transported in an infested vehicle.

Hotels are a common place to pick up these hitchhikers, regardless of the quality of the establishment.

- Use the foldout luggage rack for your suitcases. You may purchase plastic luggage bags to zip around your luggage ,e.g. "Bugzip"
- Don't leave anything on the floor or place items on the bed
- Hang your clothes in the closet and place shoes in the closet (away from the bed).
- Wash clothing immediately upon arriving home. Leave luggage out in the garage if possible until you are able to inspect it.
- You can examine the bedding and mattress for signs of crawling bugs. If you see anything suspicious, ask for a new room.
- Insect repellants, e.g. Off, do not repel bedbugs