



# BED BUGS – A GROWING PROBLEM

## Sleep Tight-Don't Let the Bed Bugs Bite!

Bed bugs have been bugging humans for years. They're mentioned by the ancient Greeks and Romans. Bed bugs probably migrated to North America in the seventeenth century and thrived until the mid-20th century when they were eradicated with pesticides.

The pests remained prevalent in other regions of the world. In recent years, bed bugs have also made a comeback in the U.S., perhaps due to international travel. Changes in modern pest control practice — and less effective bed bug pesticides — are factors suspected for the recurrence.

### What are Bed Bugs?

Bed bugs are small insects that feed on the blood of mammals and birds. Adult bed bugs are oval, wingless and rusty red colored, and have flat bodies, antennae and small eyes. 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, bedbugs feed primarily on the blood of humans, usually at night when people are sleeping.



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Although bed bugs may be a nuisance to people, they are not known to spread disease. They are known to cause allergic reactions from their saliva in sensitive people.

### How Do I Know if I Have Bed Bugs?

If you have bed bugs, you may also notice itchy welts on you or your family member's skin. You may also see the bed bugs themselves, small bloodstains from crushed bed bugs, or dark spots from bed bug droppings in your home.

### Where Are Bed Bugs Found?

Bed bugs often hide in or near beds and bedroom furniture, and in the tufts, seams, and folds of mattresses and daybed covers. In more severe infestations, bed bugs may spread to cracks and crevices in bed frames and box springs; behind headboards; inside nightstands; behind baseboards, window and door casings, pictures, and moldings; and in nearby furniture, loosened wallpaper, and cracks in plaster and flooring.



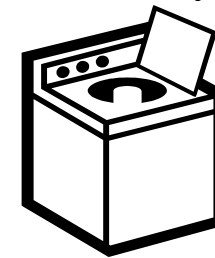
Bed bugs may also hide in piles of books, papers, boxes, and other clutter. **(Keep your home clutter free!)** Bed bugs are also known to survive in temporary or alternative habitats, such as backpacks and under the seats in cars, busses and trains. Other places where bed bugs sometimes appear include movie theaters, laundries/dry cleaners, furniture rental outlets and office buildings.

### How do I get Rid of bed Bugs

If you have a bed bug infestation or if you or your family has been bitten by bed bugs, a professional pest control company is your best line of defense..

Some of the things you can do yourself, include:

- Thoroughly clean all bedding, linens, curtains, rugs, carpets, and clothes. Make your bed. Tuck in the sheets and move the bed and furniture away from the wall



- Washing items in hot water and drying them on the highest dryer setting will kill bed bugs. For those items that may be harmed by washing and drying at high temperatures, soak in warm water with lots of laundry soap for several hours before rinsing.

- Wipe away or vacuum all dust from the bed frame, nearby furniture, floors and carpets. Vacuum mattresses carefully. After vacuuming, immediately place the vacuum cleaner bag in a plastic bag, seal it tightly, and throw the bag away in an outdoor container.



- If you find bed bugs on the mattress, buy a waterproof zippered mattress cover. These covers often say "allergen rated," or "for dust mites." Scrub the mattress seams with a stiff brush to dislodge bed bugs and any eggs.

Then enclose the mattress in the cover for at least one year. This will trap any remaining bed bugs inside the cover, killing them.

- Throw away and replace an infested box spring if necessary.
- When it is colder than 25 degrees F, place mattresses and furniture outside for several hours to kill bed bugs. Temperatures below 25 degrees F will freeze and kill bed bugs.
- Steam-clean carpets.
- Use insecticides to get rid of bed bugs that are hiding in walls and other large objects. (Choose insecticides with "**pyrethrins**" as an active ingredient on the label. Only use insecticides labeled for household use because some insecticides can damage or stain your furniture, wallpaper, etc.) Use care when applying insecticides,

Bed bugs can be difficult to get rid of because they hide so well. If two weeks have passed since you first tried to rid your home of bed bugs and you still notice signs of bed bugs, repeat the above steps. For heavy infestations contact a pest control service.



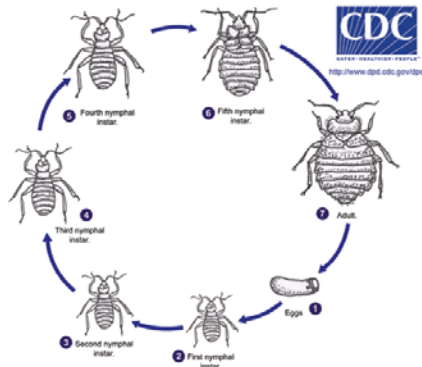
## How can I prevent bed bugs from entering my home?

Some infestations can be prevented by washing clothing and bedding immediately after returning from a trip. Inspect all used beds, sofas, or upholstered chairs and bedding for signs of bed bugs before bringing them into your home. **Never bring discarded** bed frames, mattresses, box springs, or upholstered furniture into your home. Some infestations can be prevented by washing clothing and bedding immediately after returning from a trip. Inspect all used beds, sofas, or upholstered chairs and bedding for signs of bed bugs before bringing them into your home.



## How Long Do Bed Bugs Live ?

The typical life span of a bed bug is about 10 months. They can survive for weeks to months without feeding



# What You Need to Know About Bed Bugs



CORTLAND COUNTY  
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH  
DEPARTMENT