



FACT SHEET

Bed Bugs

Bed bugs are small, flat, parasitic insects that feed exclusively on the blood of humans and animals usually while they sleep. They are a reddish-brown color, wingless, range in size from 1mm to 7mm (about the size of an apple seed). Bed bugs can survive for several months between blood meals. They have increased in prevalence in recent years due to bans on pesticides and increased international travel.

Bed bugs are not known to transmit infectious disease and are therefore not considered a public health hazard. Many people are unaware that they have even been bitten. Response to being bitten can range from no physical signs of the bite, small red bite marks (similar to that of a mosquito or flea), to an allergic reaction in rare cases. In people that do react to bed bug bites, excessive scratching can occasionally lead to a secondary skin infection. Bites may take up to 14 days to appear.

Bed bugs typically live within 8 feet of where people sleep and hide during the daytime. During the early stages of an infestation they can usually be found in seams of mattresses, box springs, bed frames, headboards, and other upholstered furniture. As they spread they may be found in dresser tables, inside cracks or crevices, behind wallpaper, or any other clutter or objects around beds and sleeping areas. The presence of bed bugs is not related to cleanliness of the area, despite this common misconception.

Bed bugs are carried into buildings on people or their belongings, most often on objects such as furniture and clothing. If you suspect a bedbug problem, check all of the following areas for live bugs, eggs, or exoskeleton shells: seams, creases, and folds of all mattresses and box springs, any cracks in bed frame or headboard, under furniture (beds, couches, chairs), between cushions of all couches and chairs, under all rugs and edges of carpeting, between folds of curtains, inside drawers, behind baseboards, around windows and door casing, behind electrical plates, cracks in plaster, inside electronics, under loose wall paper, and wall hangings (posters, paintings, etc.).

Other signs that may indicate a bedbug problem are: the presence of small reddish black blood stains and fecal matter on furniture, sheets, pillows and mattresses; and an unpleasant sweet musty odor.

If live bed bugs are seen and/or there is evidence that bed bugs may be present, notify your manager/supervisor as soon as possible so they can coordinate with housekeeping. Sightings should also be reported to the SAFE line at 473-7233.

If you suspect you have bed bugs in your home, contact your landlord (for rental properties) or a professional pest control company that specializes in the treatment of bed bugs.