

# Bed Bugs

## What are they?

Bed bugs are small, blood-eating pests that belong to the family of Cimicidae. Adult bed bugs have flat, oval-shaped bodies, and are about 5mm in length. Their width is about that of a credit card, allowing them to squeeze themselves in tight hiding places. They are a caramel color to a deep red-brown color. Young bed bugs, or nymphs, are smaller and more translucent in color. Bed bug infestations are seen world-wide. They can be tricky to identify, and quite difficult to remove. Bed bugs can be found in many public places, such as hotels, gyms, movie theaters, offices, and stores. An adult female will lay up to 500 eggs in her lifetimes.



## How do I know if I have an infestation?

Signs of an infestation include:

- Red, itchy welts on your body, specifically on areas directly exposed to your bed such as the arms and torso. The welts may be random, but often show up in a line or small clusters. Not everybody reacts the same way to Bed bug bites. Some may not get them at all. Red bumps could also indicate another problem and may not be the cause of a Bed bug infestation.
- Seeing the bed bug. Bed bugs are hard to find since they are so small and can easily hide in cracks, crevices and folds
- Finding cast skins. These are the skins shed by juvenile bugs as they grow.
- Defecation. Bed bug droppings are small and round, (about this size •) and black to brownish red in color. They might stain the surface of bed sheets much like a magic marker would.



Check all the surfaces of your bed, focusing on the headboard, and under the mattress near the headboard. Bed bugs are nocturnal, so when it's dark, turn out the lights and shine a flashlight under your sheets, under the headboard, and in any cracks and crevices in your bed. Look for the adult bed bugs, small droppings, or case shells. The pests might be hiding elsewhere, so check for signs of them in:

- the carpet
- floor vents
- seams of furniture
- curtains
- power outlets
- the junction between the wall and the ceiling
- the head of a screw

## How do I prevent Bed bugs from entering my home?

Bed bugs and their droppings on a mattress

While traveling, be sure to keep your luggage off and away from your bed. Elevate it off the floor on a luggage rack to. Check the hotel bed for signs of a bed bug by looking underneath the mattress, near the headboard, and the bed skirt, in wall junctions, and in power outlets. When you come home, immediately put all clothing and pillows in the dryer on high for at least 20 minutes.

## What do I do if I believe I have an infestation?

If you think you may have brought bed bugs home, clean your bed sheets on the hottest water temperature possible. Clean all pillows, stuffed animals, and curtains as well. Vacuum your floor more than once. Clean all clothing that came in contact with your bed, your luggage, or yourself.

Call your local pest control company. They will do a house visit to confirm your infestations and proceed to provide the necessary care to rid your house of bed bugs.

To learn more, visit the [Hiring a Pest Control Professional](#) page.