



Bedbugs

General Information: Bedbugs are little (7mm) reddish brown flat insects that feed on human blood. A female bed bug can live from 9-18 months and can lay up to 200 eggs over her lifetime. She lays her eggs in the crevices where she lives with the male bedbugs when she is not feeding. The eggs are tiny (1mm) and white and attached to the surface where they are laid. They hatch 6-10 days later and over the next month and a half or so develop into their adult form.

How do they get in? Bedbugs travel on bags, purses, luggage, clothes, and furniture. Once inside a home they travel from one area to another. They can go up to 6 months between human blood meals.

Where are they found? Bedbugs can be anywhere regardless of the cleanliness of a place. Bedbugs eat (suck blood) when the human is asleep (day or night) and will follow their blood source if he/she switches rooms. When they are not eating they live in small spaces near the person such as in the box spring, mattress seams, and cracks in the wall or tears in the wall paper. They also will live in the seams and cushions of furniture.

How do I know I have them?

While the bedbug is feeding, the person does not feel it. The bedbug often feeds in one spot and then finds another few spots to feed. A pattern of a few small bites might indicate bedbugs. They sometimes leave dark spots in the places they live or specs of blood on the sheets. It is possible to see the bedbugs. If you do see bugs that you think are bedbugs you should collect them in a sealed plastic bag to show to someone who can verify what they are.

What do I do if I have them?

- There are over the counter insecticides that you can apply to the areas where the bedbugs most likely live. Make sure to apply the insecticide in the cracks and crevices of the furniture and room where the bedbugs are living.
- It is often necessary to hire a pest control professional to ensure a full elimination of the bedbugs. Because of the various stages of a bed bugs life it is important to use products that last over a period of time to kill any bedbugs that are currently in egg form.
- Put any item that can be put in a dryer without causing damage in the dryer on high heat for 30 minutes. This can include bedding, clothes, shoes, purses, backpacks, and toys. The high heat will kill bedbugs at all stages in their lifecycle.
- Other items that cannot be placed in a dryer can be wrapped in plastic and placed in a hot location such as outdoors directly under the sun or in a closed vehicle.

The temperature inside the bag has to rise to at least 120 degrees for 20-30 minutes.

- Use a vacuum with an attachment that can access crevices and seams in beds, furniture, and walls. Because bedbugs have a strong grasps on the furniture make sure to scrape the vacuum attachment against the fabric to dislodge the bugs and the eggs. After vacuuming remove the bag, wrap it in another plastic bag to prevent bugs from escaping and discard it in the dumpster or trash can far from the house.
- If the problem is sever, sometimes it is necessary to get rid of furniture that is infested with bedbugs.
- The most effective way to eliminate bedbugs is through an application of insecticides that should be done by a pest control professional.

Adapted from: <http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/dc/zoonosis/bedbug.pdf>

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