

BED BUGS

FACT SHEET

What are Bed Bugs?

Bed bugs are small nocturnal insects that feed on the blood of humans and other warm blooded animals. They are reddish brown, flattened, oval-shaped and approximately the size of an apple seed. Bed bugs are often associated with unclean conditions, but this is a false belief; bed bugs are not particular and will infest a clean home as readily as one that is dirty. **Bed bugs have not been linked to the transmission of any disease and therefore are considered a nuisance and not a health threat.**

How Do I Know If I Have Bed Bugs?

Most people will realize they may have a bed bug problem when they begin showing symptoms of bed bug bites. Bed bug bites may seem similar to other insect bites, but usually appear in tight lines of multiple, small, red marks.

The bite may initially be painless, but later will turn into a large itchy skin welt.



Detecting bed bugs can be difficult since they usually only come out at night, and their small flat shape enables them to easily hide in small places. Despite their name, these bugs don't only hide in beds, but actually can conceal themselves in pillows, other furniture, cracks in walls and even in curtains.

Evidence of a bed bug infestation may be found in bedding and on mattresses. While sleeping, people inadvertently roll onto bed bugs, and this can result in bloodstains on their sheets, or a person may see clusters of dark brown or black excrement in cracks or crevices where bed bugs live.

How Do I Get Bed Bugs?

Bed bugs are wingless and cannot fly; they also cannot jump, but must crawl from place to place. They like to hide close to their hosts when they aren't feeding, and that is why they are usually found on and around beds. These pests can be found in apartments, hotels, homes, shelters and dormitories. They can hide on clothing or in luggage, and this is how they frequently travel. Two common ways that bed bugs get into a home are coming in through an adjacent unit or being brought in on luggage, bedding or furniture.



How Do I Prevent Bed Bugs?

- Do quick and thorough checks of your home frequently.
- Be extremely careful when purchasing used items. If disposing of something infested, do so properly to help make sure that someone does not accidentally bring the problem into their home.
- Protect yourself when traveling by researching the hotels and motels you will be staying in. Do a thorough check for bed bugs before bringing in personal items, and place personal items on tables or chairs as far away from the bed as possible.

How Do I Get Rid of Bed Bugs?



The best way to get rid of bed bugs is to eradicate the insects and then clean, disinfect and eliminate their hiding places. It is difficult to eliminate these pests on your own, so it may be best to contact a pest control professional for guidance and assistance.

For more information, please contact a public health nurse at City-County Health Department at 454-6950 or visit www.cchdmt.org.