

What you Should Know About Bed Bugs



Bed bugs occur worldwide across all social and economic levels. Bed bug infestations in North America have become increasingly more common since approximately 2000. Adult bed bugs are brown to reddish-brown, approximately 3/16 inch long, 1/8 inch wide, broadly oval and flat. Immature bed bugs (nymphs) are tiny and appear translucent or pale in color. Eggs are pearl white, about 1mm in length and extremely difficult to detect with the naked eye. Inspection for bed bugs includes locating live bed bugs, cast skins (exoskeletons) and characteristic dark spots created by fecal droppings. While these insects feed exclusively on blood there is no evidence they transmit any diseases. Bed bugs are often difficult to detect, hiding in cracks and crevices most often near beds, sofas and other sleeping places. Infestations can grow rapidly and persist indefinitely until proper corrective actions are taken. Bed bugs do not enter structures from the natural outdoor environment, they are instead introduced into the home or building from another previously infested location. Bed bugs can be picked up during travel, be brought in with rented or used furniture, introduced by visitors or by a number of other means. The exact source of an infestation is often unknown. Some ways to prevent introducing bed bugs are to avoid discarded furniture, mattresses and box springs; inspect hotel rooms upon arrival; carefully inspect luggage upon return from travel and be able to recognize all the signs of bed bugs. Identification of a bed bug infestation as early as possible is important to effective control.



Bed Bug Life Cycle



Bed Bug Bites on an Arm



Bed Bug blood stains on a box spring

Because of the complex nature of bed bug infestations it is best to rely on the expertise of pest professionals experienced in bed bug remediation to help manage them.

- Bed Bugs can be very difficult to detect. Proper diagnosis requires trained professionals. The use of specially trained dogs with their human handlers is often the most effective inspection method.
- Bed bug services are labor intensive, rely on a variety of treatment choices including the careful use of residual pesticides and are best conducted by trained, certified pest professionals.
- Effective treatment requires the complete cooperation and participation of the customer/resident to make preparations for service. Human habits which support bed bugs must be altered to limit the potential that bed bugs will be reintroduced following treatment; habits such as inspecting luggage upon returning from vacations, reducing clutter or not bringing untreated secondhand bedroom furniture into the home.
- Bed bug bites are essentially painless and often go unnoticed while bed bugs are feeding. Reactions to bed bug bites vary by individual but range from no reaction at all to severe allergic reactions.