

## For professional pest management

**To ensure successful treatment, your cooperation and that of your landlord and the pest management professional are important.** Its important to act quickly. As soon as you see these bugs, call your landlord, who will then contact a qualified, licensed pest management professional.

### **Prepare your home for the pest management professional.**

- Remove clutter. Wash all bedding (sheets, mattress covers, bedspreads) in hot water, then place bedding in a sealed, plastic bag.
- Vacuum and dispose of the vacuum bag outside the home. If a bagless vacuum is used, deposit all contents of the container into a plastic bag, seal and dispose of outside. Rinse collection container outside before re-attaching to vacuum.
- Empty dresser drawers and closets and place contents in a sealed, plastic bag. Wash and/or dry clothes on high heat setting. Store all clothing in a tightly sealed plastic bag until all insects have been eliminated. Normally this will be after two or more pesticide treatments.
- Don't bring home new furniture until bed bugs are eliminated.
- Check with the landlord to see if other guidelines are provided.

## For the do-it-yourself types

Effectively control of bed bugs requires a significant investment of time and resources. If you rent, consult your landlord regarding your bed bug problem. If you are a home owner, do some research and/or consult a qualified pest management professional before you chose any over-the-counter pesticide.

There is no single pesticide, tool or activity that, used alone, will eliminate bed bugs. Total release foggers (bug bombs) are not effective against bed bugs and may harm your health or your family's health. Multiple techniques are always required. Despite the challenges, the technology of bed bug control is improving and elimination of a bed bug infestation is achievable.

There is a lot of information available online regarding bed bugs and how to treat them. For more bed bug information, start with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's bed bug Web page: (<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/Topics/bedbugs.htm>)



**Tarrant County  
Public Health**  
1101 S. Main Street  
Fort Worth, Texas 76104

817-321-4700  
<http://health.tarrantcounty.com>

# Bed Bugs



**Fact, myth and  
what you can do  
about them.**

## Facts

Some people believe that bed bugs transmit diseases and are indicators of sanitation issues. In reality, there is no confirmed evidence indicating bed bugs pass diseases from one host to another. Laboratory tests have repeatedly shown that it is unlikely that the insect is capable of infecting its host.

Also, bed bugs should not be equated with filth or sanitation problems. The truth is that they can infect any place, clean or not. Though they do not pose a health threat, they are a nuisance pest that can quickly infest your home.

Besides being very elusive, transient and nocturnal pests, bed bugs are also very hardy insects. They can live for a year or more without eating and can survive in temperatures from nearly freezing to 122 degrees Fahrenheit. They're active at night and can usually be seen along the seams of mattresses. They may also be hiding in cracks and crevices in your furniture.

## More about bed bugs

Bed bugs are small brownish insects that feed on human blood. They can grow to about 4-5 mm long (1/8 in.) and are visible to the naked eye.

Once a bed bug hatches it requires a blood meal before it can molt, or grow. Once it reaches adult size it takes repeated blood meals over several weeks. Females lay up to five eggs per day, continuously.

Bed bug infestations may cause irritating, itchy bite reactions and anxiety. Over the past few years, bed bugs have been spreading in large cities worldwide.

Itchy skin and insect bites are clues that you may have bed bugs in your home. You'll usually see three or four bites in a straight line or grouped together. Exposed areas of your arms, legs and back are more susceptible to bites. Tell tale signs also include small black stains or "blood spots" on your sheets, pillows or mattress seams.

## What you can do about them

Bed bugs are usually brought into your home in suitcases and handbags, and on clothing and upholstered furniture, especially previously-used mattresses and other items. They can also travel between apartments in the same building. Bed bugs are not necessarily associated with dirty environments, but they flourish in clutter.

- **Vacuum your home regularly.** If you have bed bugs, make sure you close the vacuum bag tightly and dispose of it outside your home.
- **Inspect, clean or avoid acquiring used mattresses or second-hand upholstered furniture.** It's hard to see if they harbor bed bugs. Other used furniture must be carefully inspected and cleaned before you bring it home.
- **Scrub furniture with soapy water or a household cleaning product** to remove any possible bed bugs or their eggs.
- **Wash second-hand clothing properly.** Place such clothing in a sealed, plastic bag and empty directly into the washing machine. Wash in hot water and dry on hot setting to kill bed bugs and their eggs.
- **Inspect any hotel room you stay in** for signs of bed bugs prior to unpacking your luggage.

### Live Cycle of the Bed Bug (*Cimex lectularius*)



Egg  
(1 mm)



1st stage  
larva  
(1.5 mm)



2nd stage  
larva  
(2 mm)



3rd stage  
larva  
(2.5 mm)



4th stage  
larva  
(3 mm)



5th stage  
larva  
(4.5 mm)



Adult  
(5 mm)