



## Bedbugs Information Sheet

### What are Bed Bugs?

Bed Bugs (Cimicidae insect Family) are small nocturnal, wingless insects. They feed and survive solely on human and other warm blooded mammals blood. They get their name from their preferred place to make nests and live mattresses, couches, under carpets and behind skirting boards. Bed bugs have existed since the ancient times and are found throughout the world.

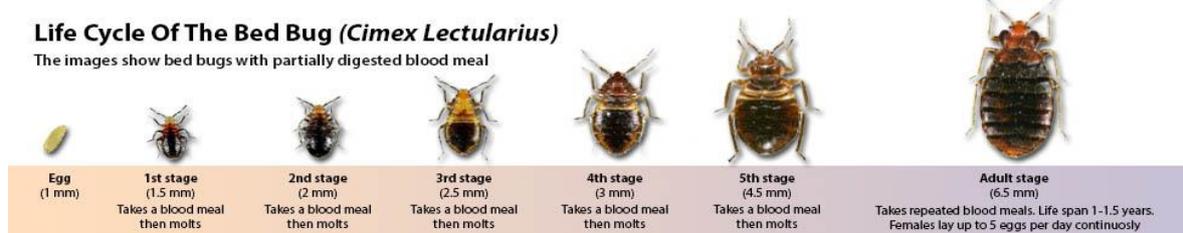
Bed Bugs were considered almost extinct. But Bed bugs have recently been making a comeback around the world. By the time we noticed them again, they were already back in large quantities. They are spreading rapidly thanks to our frequent traveling. They voyage in items such as luggage, souvenirs, and furniture that we so carelessly bring into our homes.



### What do bed bugs look like?

Bed Bugs are small, flat, wingless insects with six legs that feed on blood from animals or people. They range in colour from almost white to brown, but they turn rusty red after feeding. The common bedbug doesn't grow much longer than 0.5 centimetres and can be seen by the naked eye.

A bed bug develops fully over the span of five weeks. When the eggs hatch, they are in the nymph stage. Then they shed their skin five different times before reaching their adult size. The bed bug must eat before each Skin Shedding.



### Where are bed bugs normally found?

Bed bugs can be found in facilities that have a large turnover of people, and in close quarters. They are normally brought into your home during travel by hitching a ride from a location that has them. They are most commonly found in:

- hotels/ motels
- hostels or backpackers
- hospitals
- apartment complexes
- homeless shelters
- military barracks
- college dorms
- business offices

### How to detect bed bugs?

Bed bugs like to hide where you sleep. If you find bites and suspect bed bugs, search around for them. look for physical signs of bed bugs. When cleaning, changing bedding, or staying away from home, look for:



- Rusty or reddish stains on bed sheets or mattresses caused by bed bugs being crushed.
- Dark spots (about this size: •), which are bed bug excrement and may bleed on the fabric like a marker would.
- Eggs and eggshells, which are tiny (about 1 mm) and pale yellow skins that nymphs shed as they grow larger.
- Live bed bugs.

When not feeding, they hide in a variety of places. Some common hiding locations in your home are:

- bed frame
- headboard
- mattress
- box springs
- pillows
- Under loose wall paper and wall hangings
- bed skirts
- in carpeting at baseboards or under furniture
- In the seams of chairs and couches, between cushions, in the folds of curtains.
- In electrical receptacles and appliances.



## **What do bed bug bites look like?**

Bites can happen anywhere on the body. Most commonly they occur on areas of skin that are exposed while sleeping, such as the face, arms, legs, and hands. They visually resemble mosquito or flea bites in their earliest stages. However, bed bug bites can appear in small groupings or in a straight line. Mosquito bites are more sporadic. Flea bites remain very small and are typically located on your legs or ankles.

Some people will not experience a reaction to a bed bug bite at all. Those that do experience symptoms of a bite are likely to experience one or more of the following:

- a bite with a red, swollen area and a dark red centre
- bites in a line or grouped together in a small area
- blisters or hives at the bite site
- Bed bug bites don't always appear immediately after you're bitten. They sometimes take a few days to begin causing symptoms.
- Bed bug bites are often very itchy. You may experience a burning sensation on the skin several days after you've been bitten. You won't feel the bugs bite you because they excrete a tiny amount of anaesthesia into your body before they bite.
- If you scratch the bite, you may cause a secondary infection that can lead to swelling and bleeding.



Unlike many other biting bugs, bed bugs do not transmit diseases when they bite you. The biggest problem bed bug bites pose is that they are likely to cause a skin infection around the bite site because of excessive itching and scratching. You may also be more likely to experience insomnia because of worrying that you will be bitten again.

If you are allergic to a bed bug's bite, you may experience more dramatic symptoms. The most common symptoms of an allergic reaction to a bed bug bite include engorged bite marks, painful swelling and burning at the bite site, and in rare cases, an anaphylactic response.

## **How to reduce the risk of bed bugs in your home.**

Bed bugs are more commonly found in low cost short stay accommodation. However, they can be found anywhere that people sleep including charter boats, trains and hotels.

### **While Travelling.**

- Consider spraying the exterior of your luggage with an aerosol insecticide, as this may kill or repel bed bugs that crawl onto your luggage during transit.
- Wherever possible, thoroughly inspect your luggage on arrival at your destination and again before departing.
- Check bedding for signs of bed bug infestations or live bed bugs concealed under mattress stitching.
- Look out for signs of bed bugs wherever you stay.

### **At home.**

If you have anyone lodging or staying at your home ask them whether they have experienced unexplained insect bites. If they have, help them to inspect their belongings carefully for evidence of bed bugs and treat promptly if anything is found.

Check second-hand furniture carefully, particularly bedroom furniture, for evidence of bed bugs. If bed bugs are found have it treated by a licenced pest control technician before moving it into your home. Think carefully about picking up furniture from verge collections or tips as it could contain bedbugs.

The regular use of a vacuum cleaner with a disposable bag may help to remove adults, nymphs and cast skins. Eggs are more difficult to remove.

