

Bed Bug FAQ



- **What are bed bugs?**
- **How did we get bed bugs?**
- **What is the treatment for bed bug bites?**
- **What happens when the exterminator comes to my apartment?**
- **When I travel, what can I do to reduce my risk of bringing these bugs back with me?**
- **What SHOULD I do if I believe I have bed bugs?**
- **What SHOULDN'T I do if I believe I have bed bugs?**

What are bed bugs?

Bed bugs are a small reddish-brown insect found worldwide, that live by feeding off the blood of humans and other mammals, such as birds and bats. Bed bugs are wingless and nocturnal. Bed bugs are generally active only at dawn, with a peak feeding period about an hour before sunrise. After feeding for about five minutes, the bug returns to its hiding place.

Bites consist of a raised red bump or flat welt, and are often accompanied by intense itching. The red bump or welts are the result of an allergic reaction to the anesthetic contained in the bedbug's saliva., which is inserted into the blood of the host. Bed bug bites may appear indistinguishable from mosquito bites, though they tend to last for longer periods.

Bites may not become immediately visible, and can take up to 9 days to appear. Bed bug bites tend to not have a red dot in the center such as is characteristic of flea bites. A trait shared with flea bites, however, is tendency towards arrangements of sequential bites. Bites are often aligned three in a row, giving rise to the colloquialism "breakfast, lunch and dinner."

There have been no known cases of bed bugs passing disease from host to host. Extensive testing has been done in laboratory settings that also conclude that bed bugs are unlikely to pass disease from one person to another. Therefore bedbugs are less dangerous than some more common insects such as the flea.

How did we get bed bugs?

Bed bugs were originally brought to the United States by early colonists from Europe. Bedbugs thrive in places with high occupancy, such as hotels. Bedbugs were believed to be altogether eradicated 50 years ago in the United States and elsewhere with the widespread use of DDT. This is no longer used and may account for the resurgence of these bugs in the US, as might the increase in international travel.

Bed bugs may be found in homes, motels, hotels, movie theaters, transportation depots and rest rooms. They may be accidentally moved with clothes, suitcases, furniture and other personal items. Bed bugs may also be transported in second-hand or rental furniture. Bed bugs do not fly or jump, but they move quickly over floors, walls, ceilings, and furniture.

Anyone who comes in direct contact with bed bugs can carry them into their homes. Bed bugs are equal opportunity pests – they will infest anyone, anywhere. Infestations are not tied to unsanitary living conditions; even world-class hotels have reported bed bug problems.

What is the Treatment for bed bug bites?

It is important to note that bed bugs do not carry any human diseases. Suggestions to treat the bites include:

- Resist the urge to scratch. Scratching may only intensify the itch and cause an infection.
- Wash the bites with antiseptic soap to reduce the risk of infection.
- Apply an ice pack frequently to help relieve swelling.
- See your health care provider if you develop an infection.

What happens when the exterminator comes to my apartment?

If your apartment is confirmed to have bed bugs, the property's exterminator will come to treat your apartment. You will be required to bag and remove all clothing and bedding prior to the treatment.

The treatment will likely consist of a few different approaches; A pesticide will be applied to locations within your apartment that may harbor the bugs. The exterminator may place blue boards in your room. These boards can be good detectives and show the degree of success of the treatment. The exterminator will perform a THOROUGH and DETAILED vacuuming of our room and belongings. All of your room and items contained within it should be vacuumed on the outside surface and each drawer, crevice, etc. must also be vacuumed. You will need to be out of your apartment during treatment and for 2 hours after treatment is completed (expect around 4 hours).

Once you are permitted back in your apartment, you may unpack your laundry. This includes; mattress, bed frame, dresser, personal furniture, books and bookshelf, window and frame, inside closet, blinds, electrical equipment and computer, laundry basket, pictures, shoes and shoe boxes, clock and phone, area rugs, audio or video equipment, mirror, cd/dvd cases, perimeter of room.

A follow-up treatment will occur 14 days after the initial treatment. Rooms adjacent, above and below will also be treated as a precaution.

When I travel, what can I do to reduce my risk of bringing these bugs back with me?

First, look at the room to seek potential hiding places for bedbugs, such as carpet edges, mattress seams, pillow case linings, head boards, wall trim or other tiny crack-like places bed bugs might hide.

Next, look specifically at the mattress seams for signs of bed bug activity; droppings, eggs, bloodstains or even bed bugs themselves – hiding in tiny folds and seam lines.

Never leave your clothing laying on the bed, or any location of possible infestation. Instead, use hangers or hooks capable of keeping all cloth distant from the floor or bed.

It's also not a bad idea to elevate suitcases off the floor on a luggage stand, table top or other hard surface. Close your suitcase, travel bag, when you're not using it. This way during the night the bugs may move over top of your luggage with greater difficulty to get inside. Elevate your luggage off the floor to tables or chairs. These may also be hiding places, but less likely.

Keep any bed bug you find (intact if possible) to show the hotel owner.

When you return from any travel (especially abroad) it is a good idea to take your suitcase to the Laundromat so you can wash ALL items before taking the suitcase to your apartment. If you wash all laundry in hot water before entering your residence, you will stop the spread of these bugs.

What SHOULD I do if I believe I have bed bugs?

Report your concern to the Property Management Department ASAP. Be prepared to follow the written instructions **prior to treatment**.

What SHOULDN'T I do if I believe I have bed bugs?

Don't panic! Although bed bugs can be annoying, they can be battled safely and successfully if you follow all guidelines given to you by Management.

If you believe you have bed bugs, do NOT delay notifying your Property Management or Maintenance. If you let management know early on a business day, the exterminator may be able to inspect your apartment the same day. If this is not possible, the exterminator will come the next business day. Please keep in mind that it is only possible to get service from the exterminator during weekday business hours.

Do not apply pesticides on your own. Arbor Housing and Development hires a licensed pest control operator to confirm the infestation and to develop an integrated pest management plan.

Do not move your mattress or any furniture outside your apartment. Infested furniture can be cleaned and treated. Placing infested furniture (particularly mattresses) into common areas or on the street may simply help spread bed bugs to the apartments of other residents.

Do not go sleep in a friend's apartment or in other places away from the community. If you actually have bed bugs, you will only spread them to others.