

Bed Bug Fact Sheet

What are bed bugs?

- Bed bugs are small insects that feed on the blood of people, birds, and other animals.
- They are oval with flat, rusty red colored bodies after they have fed. Before, they are lighter in color.
- Bed bugs cannot fly or jump.
- Bed bugs are not a sign of poor hygiene or cleanliness. Anyone can be affected by bed bugs.
- Bed bugs often hide in bedding, on mattresses and box springs, and in cracks and gaps in walls and furniture.



What are bed bug bites like?

- Bed bugs usually bite at night when people are sleeping.
- Bed bug bites are painless and usually don't wake people.
- The bites can develop into large itchy spots on the skin. Some people may not react at all. Bed bugs are not known to carry diseases. Scratching itchy bites can cause infection.

How do I get bed bugs?

- Bed bugs can be brought into an apartment or house on luggage, used clothing, electronics, furniture, and bedding or other items once placed in an infested area.
- They can move from one apartment to another when heavily infested (large numbers of them) or if the apartment has not been properly treated.
- Travel (both in the United States and internationally) and staying or living in homeless shelters, hotels, youth hostels, dormitories, and group homes, increases the risk of picking up bed bugs if preventative actions are not taken.



How do I prevent bed bugs in my apartment or house?

- Inspect all used furniture before bringing it into your apartment or house. Look in the cracks and gaps with a flashlight for bed bugs.
- Cover used mattresses and box springs in a bed bug proof plastic case.
- Wash all used bedding, clothing, curtains, and other linens right away in hot water and dry in a hot dryer.
- When traveling, check luggage and other belongings before entering your house or apartment. Inspect the rooms you're staying in for bed bugs.

What should I do if I think I have bed bugs in my house or apartment?

- It is hard to get rid of bedbugs, but it can be done.
- If you think you have bed bugs...
 - Look in the cracks and gaps in furniture, bedding, trim, window coverings, etc. with a flashlight.
 - Clean and remove clutter in infested area(s) to reduce hiding places.
 - Carefully clean infested area using brush and vacuum (empty vacuum immediately after use/get rid of vacuum bag by enclosing in plastic bag and putting in garbage).
 - Seal mattress and box spring in bed bug proof plastic cases.
 - Wash all bedding and linens in hot water and dry in hot dryer.

- Over the counter pesticides and aerosol foggers (bug bombs) do not work, and if not used correctly, can result in chemical poisoning.
- The best way to get rid of bed bugs is to have a professional pest control company do it. Heat treatment combined with chemical use is the most effective way to control bed bugs.



What if I rent my house or apartment?

- You should call your landlord so your landlord can hire a pest control company.
- You can also call your local building inspector for assistance or Public Health Madison & Dane County at 608-242-6515.

Where can I get more information about bed bugs?

- Wisconsin Department of Health Services Bed Bugs
 - <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/disease/bedbugs.htm>
- University of Wisconsin Extension Bed Bugs in Wisconsin
 - <http://labs.russell.wisc.edu/insectid/files/2014/03/Bedbugs.pdf>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Bed Bugs FAQ's
 - <http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/bedbugs/faqs.html>
- Michigan Manual for Prevention and Control of Bed Bugs
 - http://www.michigan.gov/documents/emergingdiseases/Bed_Bug_Manual_v1_full_reduce_326605_7.pdf