

## Good household practices

Bed bug infestations can happen in any home. Inspect beds for bed bugs and signs of their activity when you launder bedding each week, especially if you visit or work in other people's homes. Use a flashlight and a magnifying glass and if you find bugs take a specimen to your building management staff, contact a professional pest control company, or your county Cooperative Extension Office for verification.

Avoid second-hand beds, bedding and mattresses, and inspect second-hand or rented furniture carefully before bringing it into your home. Launder all second-hand bedding and clothing before storing.

When travelling, check hotel beds for bed bugs and fecal spots before settling into the room, following the same methods used to check your home.

If you live in an apartment, know what is happening in your building by talking with neighbors and attending community meetings. Bed bugs can move between apartments.

Don't panic! If a bed bug is found, infestations can be eliminated successfully when the appropriate pest management steps are followed.

Early detection and immediate involvement of an experienced pest management professional can help to minimize costs, bites, and stress.

Vacuuming weekly helps to remove bed bugs. Afterwards remember to empty vacuum canisters or remove the vacuum bag and dispose of in an outdoor dumpster.

Encase mattresses and box springs in bed bug-proof encasements.

Thoroughly wash suspect clothing and bedding and dry in a dryer on a high heat setting. Continue drying for at least 40 minutes after the items are dry.

Retail insecticides will often kill the bed bugs you can see but fail to eradicate an infestation. Contacting a pest management company experienced in bed bug eradication is advisable.

For more information on bed bugs:  
[extension.arizona.edu/pubs/az1625-2014.pdf](http://extension.arizona.edu/pubs/az1625-2014.pdf)



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**This information has been reviewed  
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# BED BUGS

## What you Need to Know



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**Bed bugs** are small, flat, red-brown insects that feed on the blood of humans and other warm-blooded animals. Adult bed bugs are about ¼-inch in length with a flat oval shape and are about the size of an apple seed before feeding. They elongate and lose their flattened appearance after feeding. They do not jump or fly and are not known to transmit disease-causing pathogens under normal living conditions. They crawl quickly and hide in dark crevices during the day.

Bed bugs infest places people live, and other locations where people sleep or are stationary for long periods of time. However, bed bugs can be found everywhere that people go, since the bugs hitchhike on people as they move around and can drop off anywhere.

Bed bugs feed when people are sleeping or still, usually during the night. They are attracted by body warmth and the presence of exhaled breath. They are most active between midnight and 3 am but will feed at other times if hungry. They insert needle-like mouth parts into the skin to draw blood from a host. Bed bugs do not burrow into host skin.



Photo: [www.alexanderwild.com](http://www.alexanderwild.com)

## Finding bed bugs

Often bed bugs are initially noticed in bedrooms or on living room furniture several weeks after they first arrive. As they reproduce and their numbers increase, they become more noticeable and if unchecked populations can increase and spread throughout a home. Eggs, immature stages, and adult bed bugs can all be found clustered together in crevices, and folds in beds, furniture, and structures.

Look for bed bugs:

- In seams, corners, creases and folds of mattresses, box springs, bedding, bed frames and headboards.
- Along and under the edge of carpeting.
- In crevices and corners of hardwood floors.
- Behind moldings, baseboards, light-switch and electrical outlet covers, loose wallpaper and wall hangings.
- Inside and under dressers, and nightstands.
- In upholstered furniture.
- Inside clocks, phones, TVs, remote controls, smoke detectors and electronic devices.
- In clothing in closets, drawers, and curtains near beds.

## Early signs of bed bugs

One of the first signs that people report when they suspect bed bugs is unexplained red welts on arms, face, neck, or feet, that may or may not be itchy. Very few people ever feel bed bugs when they bite, but as they feed, they inject saliva that contains an anticoagulant that promotes blood flow. Some people develop an itchy response to the bites and visible welts develop, but others have no reaction at all. Few people have severe reactions, but those severely impacted may need medical attention. Reactions to bites can show within hours, days or up to two weeks after a person was bitten.



After feeding, bed bugs retreat to a protective hiding place to mate and digest their meal. Bed bugs will feed every 3-5 days if a host is present. Bed bugs defecate after feeding and their liquid droppings look like small dark spots that soak into absorbent material or leave smooth dark spots on hard surfaces.