



Bedbug Basics

Bedbugs are small, oval, brownish insects that live on the blood of animals or humans. Adult bedbugs have flat bodies about the size of an apple seed. After feeding, however, their bodies swell and are a reddish color.

Bedbugs may enter your home undetected through luggage, clothing, used beds and couches, and other items. Their flattened bodies make it possible for them to fit into tiny spaces, about the width of a credit card. Bedbugs do not have nests like ants or bees, but tend to live in groups in hiding places. Their initial hiding places are typically in mattresses, box springs, bed frames, and headboards where they have easy access to people to bite in the night.

Over time, however, they may scatter through the bedroom, moving into any crevice or protected location. They may also spread to nearby rooms or apartments.

Because bedbugs live solely on blood, having them in your home is not a sign of dirtiness. You are as likely to find them in immaculate homes and hotel rooms as in filthy ones.

Although they are a nuisance, they do not transmit diseases.

If you wake up with itchy areas you didn't have when you went to sleep, you may have bedbugs, particularly if you got a used bed or other used furniture around the time the bites started. Other signs that you have bedbugs include:

- Blood stains on your sheets or pillowcases
- Dark or rusty spots of bedbug excrement on sheets and mattresses, bed clothes, and walls
- Bedbug fecal spots, egg shells, or shed skins in areas where bedbugs hide
- An offensive, musty odor from the bugs' scent glands

If you suspect an infestation, remove all bedding and check it carefully for signs of the bugs or their excrement. Remove the dust cover over the bottom of the box springs and examine the seams in the wood framing. Peel back the fabric where it is stapled to the wood frame.

Also, check the area around the bed, including inside books, telephones or radios, the edge of the carpet, and even in electrical outlets. Check your closet, because bedbugs can attach to clothing. If you are uncertain about signs of bedbugs, call an exterminator, who will know what to look for.

If you find signs of infestation, begin steps to get rid of the bugs and prevent their return.

**If you would like more information, please contact
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