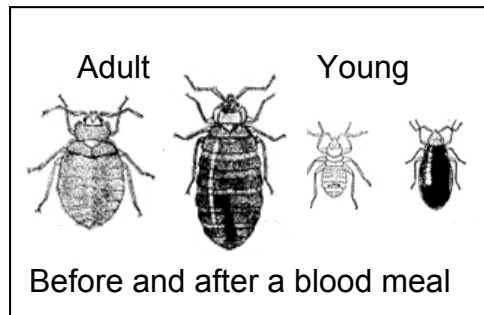


# How to Protect You and Your Family from Bed Bugs

## Introduction

In the past ten years bed bugs have become a serious pest in the US. Bed bugs, like mosquitoes, are insects that feed on blood. Bed bugs live in the home, especially in and around the bed, and usually bite at night when people are sleeping. They will feed at any time of day if necessary.

Bed bugs have three main stages of life, the egg, the young and the adult. Young bed bugs can vary in size from poppy seed to sesame seed, and adults can be as big as an apple seed. All are tan or brownish-red in color. They may be full of blood, as seen in the drawing to the left.



The first sign of bed bugs is usually a group of bites. If you experience bites, look for bed bugs in your bed or where you have slept recently. Have you been outside in warm weather? They could be mosquito or flea bites or something else. Everyone reacts differently to bed bug bites. Some people don't react at all, and others develop itchy lumps.

## Fast Facts about Bed Bugs

Bed bugs:

- Do **not** transmit diseases to people
- May trigger asthma
- Can **not** fly or jump, but **can** run fast
- Are large enough to be seen
- Can be transported in personal belongings
- Are often found on thrown out furniture
- Can travel through a building
- Can be difficult to control
- Can be eliminated and prevented

Bed bug droppings and egg shells. Photo by Gary Alpert.

## Where to Look for Bed Bugs

- Check the sheets, pillows and blankets for stains.
- Look under the mattress and pillows.
- Check the seams and puckers of the mattress and box spring.
- Look at the bed frame for bugs and stains.
- Check the floor and moldings.
- Look inside and underneath drawers.
- Radios, phones, clocks near the bed or on a nightstand may also be hiding places for bed bugs.

Bed bug adult and droppings on a mattress. Photo by Harold Harlan.

## How to Help Yourself

- Don't panic, bed bugs are not life threatening.
- Call your building manager, landlord or social service provider immediately if you think there may be bed bugs in your room or bed.
- Follow all instructions given to you.
- Wash and dry your clothing and bedding on hot. 30 minutes of heat kills bugs and their eggs.
- Wash donated clothing before wearing.
- Do not take furniture or items from the street, they may have bed bugs!
- Do not try to use pesticides on your own.
- "Bug bombs" are not effective for bed bugs.
- Talk to others about it; bed bugs are common today in all types of housing. Everyone should be aware.
- Cooperate with those trying to help you.



Bed bugs and residue on back of vinyl molding. Photo by Louis Sorkin.

**Prevent the spread of bed bugs by following these steps and talking about it. Ask for help!**

**Correct identification!** Bed bugs may be confused with other household insects such as cockroaches, carpet beetles, or spider beetles. If you find an insect that may be a bed bug, **SAVE IT** in a container for identification! **These are not bed bugs:**



### German cockroaches

Young roaches look like bed bugs. Look for rectangular egg cases and fecal pellets. The color is more brown than red.

**Carpet and warehouse beetle adults and larvae** may appear in beds feeding on hair and feathers. Larvae may shed tiny hairs that cause itching but these do not bite.



**Shiny spider beetles** are often confused with bed bugs and ticks. They feed on dried plant material, seeds, or dried meat and do not bite humans.