

How to kill bed bugs

Non-chemical treatment

Below are the most effective and economical ways to manage low-level bed bug infestations.

1. Kill bugs by placing fabric items in a clothes dryer on high heat (120°F) for 30 minutes.
2. Kill bugs by bagging small items (i.e. toys, books, shoes) and placing in freezer (0°F) for at least 4 days.
3. Remove bugs by using vacuum with crevice tool and discard contents immediately.
4. Catch bed bugs with commercial pitfall traps by placing interceptors under furniture legs.

Choosing a pest control company

Effective treatment is important for quick relief and long-term control. Consider hiring a trained and licensed professional.

There are two main types of treatments:

1. Chemical treatment - Consists of at least 2 visits (~2 hours/each) with various insecticidal formulations and products. Bed bugs must come in contact with material, placed strategically near bed bug hiding spots.
2. Heat treatment - Use of commercial heating units and thermal monitoring to bring infested spaces up to lethal temperatures to kill all life stages. May take 6-8 hours and provides no residual effects.

Things to consider before deciding:

- Type of dwelling
- Number of rooms or square feet
- Amount of preparation
- Level of infestation
- Cost of treatment



Recently fed bed bugs are deep red, elongated, and engorged with blood.





Nymphs are as small as 1/16-inch long.

Unfed nymphs are almost transparent.

N EXTENSION

Connect with the Urban Entomologists!

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Dealing with Bed Bugs


The discovery of bed bugs often leads to panic and hasty reactions due to the misinformation and stigma associated with bed bugs.

Anyone can get bed bugs. Early detection and proper treatment improve the success of getting rid of them. Learn how to identify, inspect, and manage bed bugs in your home.

Bed bugs are wingless, reddish-brown, oval-shaped, and flattened. Adults can be up to 1/4-inch long.



Truths about bed bugs

- Can be seen with the naked eye. 
- Will feed on human blood but does not live on the body.
- Cannot fly or jump, but can crawl rather quickly.
- Can be found in places other than the bed.
- Hide and hitchhike in/on belongings, which is how they get transported to new locations.
- Spend most of their time in cracks and crevices close to where humans sleep.
- Bites are not always detected and some people have no reaction.
- Do not spread diseases to humans.
- Can live for months without a blood meal.



Bed bug eggs are 3/64-inch long and often stuck to hidden surfaces.

Check for bed bugs

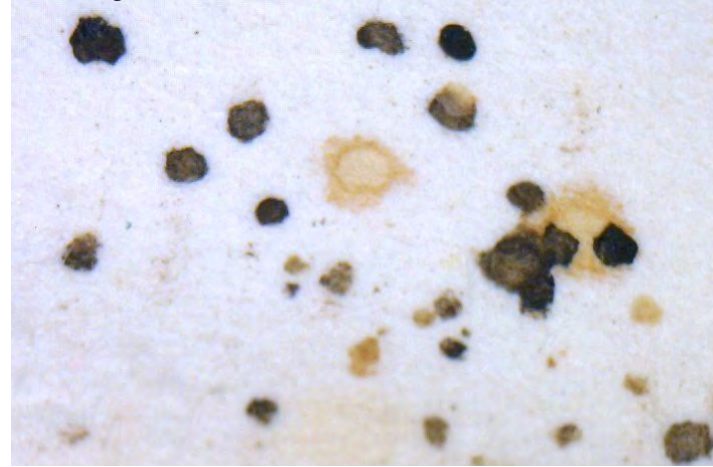
Begin looking where people sleep or spend most of their time (i.e. bed, sofa, recliner).

- Use a bright flashlight.
- Check hidden and undisturbed areas.
- Pull back fitted sheets, blankets, bed skirts, dust covers, and other bedding.
- Look for signs of bed bugs (see photos).
- Check mattress, box spring, decorative pillows, outlet covers, baseboards, curtains, and items close by.
- Pay close attention to fabric seams, folds, and tufts, zippers, tags, cracks, or crevices.



Bed bugs molt and shed skin (exoskeleton) five times before becoming an adult.

Fecal marks are dark stains that are found where bed bugs hide such as the bed frame, mattress, box spring, bedding, books, and other surfaces.



 **h no, I found a bed bug**

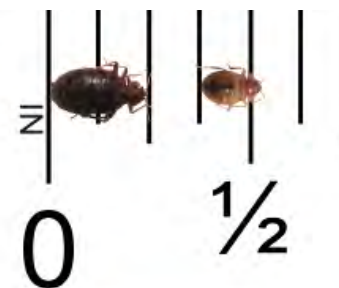
Do not panic. Do not throw mattress away.

1. Find the source (i.e. recent travel, new/used furniture, hosting visitors, place of employment, multi-family housing).
2. Stop the spread to other places and people. If applicable, contact landlord.
3. Treat infested areas with appropriate measures.
4. Prevent infestations of new bed bugs.
5. Monitor for signs of bed bugs. (Mattress encasements can aid in early detection).

Is this a bed bug?

Save it, don't squish. It must be identified.

- Place bug in plastic bag or clear container.
- Drop sample off at local Extension office or submit a photo via email.



Bed bugs are often compared to the size and shape of an apple seed.