Preventing Bed Bug Infestations

Bed bugs are blood-feeding insects that secretly crawl into human belongings and hitchhike to different locations. Bed bugs can be found anywhere people go and they do not discriminate. They can affect individuals, families, and communities regardless of cleanliness, ethnic group, race, age, or socioeconomic status.

Tips for travelers

Upon arrival at the destination

- Inspect hotel room for signs of bed bugs.
- Use a flashlight or mobile phone app.
- Pull back bedding from box spring and examine seams, corners, folds, tags, etc.
- Keep luggage on a hard surface, such as closet, desk, or in the bathroom.
- Bag and isolate dirty laundry because bed bugs are attracted to the human scent.
- If you find a bed bug, collect it, and report it to management.

Returning home from a trip

- Unpack bags outside or in the garage.
- Take clothes directly to clothes dryer. Run on high heat for 20 to 30 minutes before putting in hamper to wash at a later time.
- Inspect items before bringing indoors.
- Keep outerwear, shoes, purses, and backpacks out of bedrooms.
- Vacuum or wipe down luggage before storing them in an area where nobody sleeps like garage, basement, or storage.

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Nebraska Extension in Douglas-Sarpy Counties

8015 W. Center Rd, Omaha, NE 68124

Extension.unl.edu/statewide/douglas-sarpy
(402) 444-7804
Douglas-sarpy@unl.edu

Insect identification resources:
- digitaldiagnostics.unl.edu
- ask.extension.org/ask

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If a bed bug is present, it may get noticed coming out to feed. Bed bugs can hide in places other than the bed.
**Common name**
Human bed bug

**Scientific name**
*Cimex lectularius*

**Look-alikes**
Bat bug, swallow bug

**Identification**
- Wingless, reddish-brown, and oval-shaped
- Unfed bed bugs are flattened
- Engorged bed bugs are deep red, and elongated

**Size**
- Eggs are 3/64-inch long, stuck to hidden surfaces
- Nymphs and adults are 1/16-inch to 1/4-inch long

**Habitat**
- Cracks and crevices near host resting areas, including folds and seams of fabrics on bed, sofa, or recliner

**Signs**
- Live or dead bugs, shed skins (exoskeletons), blood/fecal stains, eggs, and mysterious bites

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**Preventative actions**

- Reduce clutter to minimize hiding spots.
- Regularly change, inspect, and launder bedding.
- Do not bring home used or free furniture.
- Use light-colored sheets or use mattress encasements for quick and easy detection.
- Vacuum and inspect upholstered furniture.
- Store items like bedding and luggage in plastic totes to isolate from bed bugs.
- Monitor for bed bugs using pitfall traps/interceptors under furniture legs.
- Communicate to friends and family members about bed bugs to avoid transferring them during visits, holiday travel, and vacations.

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Bed bugs need you!

Bed bugs require a blood meal to survive, so after they are introduced into a new setting, they locate a host by detecting carbon dioxide.

They hide and thrive in settings where people commonly sleep such as houses, apartments, hotels, college dorms, senior living facilities, hostels, and shelters.

Know how to detect bed bugs while visiting others, traveling, or working. Bed bugs do not spread disease, but they are a public health concern, and a terrible inconvenience with regards to time and money.

Don't let them come home with you!