

## Bed Bug Tips from the National Pesticide Information Center

<http://npic.orst.edu/pest/bedbug.html>

### Understanding and Controlling Bed Bugs



**Adults are >1/4" long, about the size of an apple seed.**

Bed bugs enter homes or apartments by hiding in the cracks and seams of luggage, furniture, clothing, pillows, boxes and other objects when they are moved between apartments, homes and hotels. They also can ride in items carried on trains, buses, cars, or airplanes.

Usually bed bugs hide during the day and feed at night. Since bed bugs feed on blood, their presence has little to do with the cleanliness of the home, although clutter can provide hiding spaces for bed bugs and make them difficult to treat. Bed bugs can survive for months without feeding, so they may be present in vacant, clean homes when new tenants unpack. Once bed bugs are established, they rapidly reproduce and spread from room to room.

Bed bugs can be very difficult to control, even for trained professionals. Many insecticides are not effective at killing the eggs, so a repeat treatment is often necessary to kill the juveniles after they hatch. Even worse, some populations of bed bugs have developed resistance to common insecticides, making some sprays ineffective. Alternative methods include heat and steam treatments, structural fumigations and cold treatments.

#### **Keep in mind these important tips:**

- Bed bugs can be easily confused with other insects. Bed bugs are visible to the human eye; **adults are about the size of an apple seed**. There are picture-guides linked below. If you need assistance, consider contacting your local [Cooperative Extension Service](#) for help identifying a possible bed bug. If you can catch a bug on a piece of tape, that will help identify the problem.
- NEVER bring furniture, luggage, decorative items, etc. into your apartment that you found on the side of the road or in a dumpster. Accept used furniture only from sources who assure you that it is free of bed bugs.
- Ask your landlord if the apartment you're moving into has ever been treated for bed bugs and, if so, how long that protection should last. If you suspect your apartment has bed bugs, report it immediately to your landlord. The sooner the problem is discovered and treated, the more effective the treatment. Talk with neighbors and your landlord about making a coordinated effort to treat the

problem. Bed bugs can move through cracks and crevices of walls from one room to the next even if they cannot ride on someone or something.

- "Bug bombs" or [total release foggers](#) are **not effective against bed bugs** according to the [National Center for Healthy Housing](#). The pesticide droplets generated by foggers typically do not penetrate the hiding spaces used by bed bugs.
- Infested items that cannot be treated with pesticides (bedding, clothing, electronic items) can be treated with heat or cold to kill the bed bugs. See the resources below for the specific methods, including the temperatures known to be effective.
- If you discard infested items, clearly mark them to prevent others from taking bed bugs home. Consider drawing a picture of a bug, which can be understood by people who speak different languages.
- Many experts recommend an IPM approach, which stands for [Integrated Pest Management](#). This approach emphasizes monitoring and prevention coupled with non-chemical treatments and uses pesticides only as a last resort when other options have failed.
- Remember that bed bugs ride on objects carried place to place, so inspect second-hand furniture, boxes or travel bags before bringing them into your home to make sure you are not also bringing in bed bugs. The resources below discuss how to inspect items for bed bugs.

The [National Pesticide Information Center](#) (NPIC) received hundreds of calls last year from all over the country about bed bugs. If you have questions, please call NPIC at 1-800-858-7378 (7:30am-3:30pm PST), or email [npic@ace.orst.edu](mailto:npic@ace.orst.edu).

### **Additional Resources on this Topic**

- [Bed Bug Information](#) - U. S. EPA <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/bedbugs/index.html>
- [Bed Bugs: Best Management Practices](#) - National Pest Management Association (NPMA) <http://www.npmapestworld.org/publicpolicy/documents/NPMABedBugBMPAPPROVED20110124>
- [What's Working for Bed Bug Control in Multifamily Housing](#) - National Center for Healthy Housing [http://www.healthyhometraining.org/ipm/NCHH\\_Bed\\_Bug\\_Control\\_2-12-10.pdf](http://www.healthyhometraining.org/ipm/NCHH_Bed_Bug_Control_2-12-10.pdf)
- [Bed Bug Fact Sheet](#) - Ohio State University <http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/2000/pdf/2105.pdf>
- [Control of Bed Bugs In Residences](#) - University of Minnesota Extension [http://www.ipmctoc.umn.edu/Control\\_of\\_bedbugs\\_in\\_residences\\_US\\_Commercial.pdf](http://www.ipmctoc.umn.edu/Control_of_bedbugs_in_residences_US_Commercial.pdf)
- [Traveler Q & A: Preventing bed bugs from hitchhiking to your home](#) - University of Minnesota Extension <http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/housingandclothing/M1196.html>

### **Bed Bug Videos**

- [Bed Bugs](#) - National Geographic <http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/player/animals/bugs-animals/other-bugs/bedbugs.html>
- [National Bed Bug Summit Video Webinar Presentations](#) - U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/ppdc/bedbug-summit/agenda-audio.html>
- [How to Inspect a Bed for Bed Bugs](#) - Bed Bug Central TV <http://tv.bedbugcentral.com/tv/index.php/2010/03/how-to-inspect-a-bed-for-bed-bugs/>
- [Advisory - Dry Ice Bed Bug Trap Update](#) - Bed Bug Central TV <http://tv.bedbugcentral.com/tv/index.php/2010/01/advisory-dry-ice-bed-bug-trap-update>

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