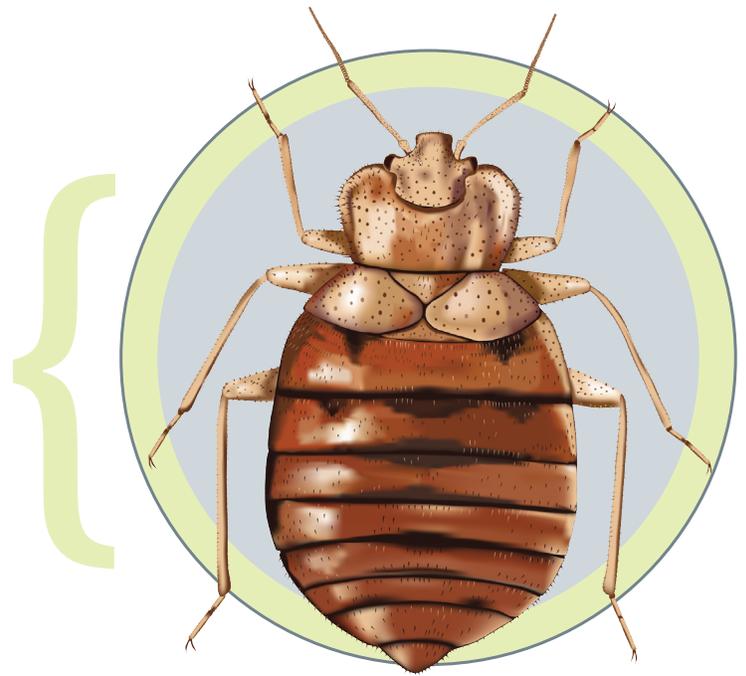


In recent years Ontario and other Canadian provinces and territories have seen an increase in the number of bed bug reports. It is possible for anyone, anywhere to experience a bed bug infestation. Bed bugs are small biting insects that multiply quickly and travel easily. Bed bugs can be prevented and controlled. The sooner everyone responds, the more successful we will be at controlling this pest.



PREVENT

HOW DO I PREVENT BED BUGS FROM ENTERING MY APARTMENT OR HOME?

Although even the cleanest homes and hotels can have bed bugs, regular inspection and house cleaning, including vacuuming your mattress, can help prevent or discover an infestation in its early stages. Clean up clutter to help reduce the number of places bed bugs can hide and to make inspection easier. Seal cracks and crevices with caulking, even if you don't have bed bugs. This will help prevent bed bugs and other pests from entering your home or apartment.

Be careful when buying used furniture or clothes. Make sure to inspect the used item, and feel free to ask if the items were checked for bed bugs. Never bring discarded bed frames, mattresses, box springs, upholstered furniture or electronics into your home. These items may be infested with bed bugs.

HOW DO I KEEP FROM BRINGING THEM HOME WHEN I TRAVEL?

When travelling, inspect the room and furniture and look for blood spots, droppings or live insects. Request a different room if you find evidence of bed bugs. Inspect luggage when you return home, preferably before you bring your luggage into the house, and wash clothing in the hottest water possible followed by 30 minutes in a hot dryer immediately after returning from a trip.

IDENTIFY

WHAT ARE BED BUGS?

Bed bugs are insects with oval-shaped bodies and no wings. Bed bugs usually bite at night and will bite all over, especially around the face, neck, upper torso, arms and hands. There are currently no known cases of infectious disease transmitted to people by bed bug bites.

HOW CAN I FIND THEM?

Use a bright flashlight to look for bed bugs or their dark droppings in bedroom furniture, windows and doorframes. Or use a hot hair dryer, a thin knife or an old playing card to force them out of hiding spaces and cracks.



Check:

- behind your headboard and around cracks and crevices of your bed.
- in the seams and tufts of your mattress.
- inside the box spring and along the bed frame.
- along bedroom baseboard cracks.
- in and around nightstands.
- other bedroom items, including window and door casings, pictures, mouldings, nearby furniture, loose wallpaper, cracks in plaster and partitions and clutter.



WHAT DOES A BED BUG BITE FEEL AND LOOK LIKE?

Most bed bug bites are initially painless, but could turn into large, itchy skin welts. Some people have no reaction at all. Most bed bug bites eventually go away by themselves and don't need treatment.



ACT

WHAT CAN I DO IF I HAVE BED BUGS IN MY APARTMENT OR HOME?

Consult with your landlord, building manager, local Public Health Unit or a pest control professional to confirm that you have bed bugs.

Use a nozzle attachment on the vacuum to remove live adult bed bugs and immature bed bugs (called nymphs) and their eggs.

Vacuum all crevices on your mattress, bed frame, baseboards and any objects close to the bed. It is essential to vacuum daily and empty the vacuum bag immediately or seal it and place it in the freezer for several days. Wash all your clothing, bed sheets, blankets, mattress pads, pillows and their cases in the hottest water possible and place them in a hot dryer for 30 minutes. Consider covering your pillows and mattress with a plastic cover.

Remove all unnecessary clutter. Seal cracks and crevices between baseboards, on wood bed frames, floors and walls with caulking.

Repair or remove peeling wallpaper, tighten loose light switch covers, and seal any openings where pipes, wires or other utilities come into your home (pay special attention to walls that are shared between apartments). Dispose of infested items that cannot be cleaned and get rid of clutter. Seal all items tightly in a plastic garbage bag and discard in a clearly labelled outside container.

SHOULD I USE A PEST CONTROL COMPANY?

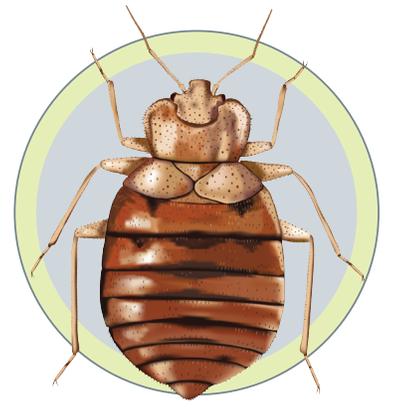
Bed bug control requires an integrated pest management (IPM) approach that includes proper preparation and inspection, identification and housekeeping. This will ensure the risk of pesticide exposure is minimized, the environment is protected, and the effectiveness of the treatment is maximized.

Getting rid of bed bug infestations usually requires the use of pesticides. Only professionals should apply pesticides for bed bugs. Foggers and bug bombs are not effective against them. There are many licensed pest control companies in Ontario who have the proper training and experience to manage a bed bug infestation. To find a licensed company near you go to:

www.spmao.ca

www.pestworld.org

BED BUG MYTHS



It's easy to get incorrect information about bed bugs and their impact on our lives. Knowledge of bed bug facts will help you understand what you need to do to control them. Here are some common bed bug myths and the real facts.

1. YOU CAN'T SEE BED BUGS

Adult bed bugs are easily spotted. Adult bed bugs are 3mm - 5mm in size - about the size and shape of an apple seed - and a reddish brown colour.

2. THROW OUT YOUR BED AND YOU'LL BE RID OF BED BUGS

They may be called bed bugs but they don't just live in your bed. They can occupy almost any dark crack or crevice in a room. Almost everything including clothing, bedding, furniture and electronics can be treated to remove bed bugs. By disposing of infested furniture prior to it being inspected and treated, you can actually spread bed bugs. If you need to dispose of furniture or a mattress, make sure it is sealed with plastic and mark the item to indicate it has been infested by bed bugs. If possible, destroy items prior to disposal to make them unusable.

3. YOU ONLY GET BED BUGS IF YOU LIVE IN A LOW-INCOME NEIGHBOURHOOD

Bed bugs are an exposure pest and are not necessarily associated with living conditions. Bed bugs can happen to anyone, anywhere. You get bed bugs by coming into contact with them. Increasingly, people who frequently travel become exposed to bed bugs and bring them back home.

4. YOU NEED TO WASH ALL OF YOUR CLOTHES FOR A BED BUG TREATMENT TO BE EFFECTIVE

Yes as a general rule washing in hot water and drying on the hot setting can help destroy bed bugs in clothing. But you might not have to wash all your clothes. The first thing you need to do is have your home or apartment inspected by a professional pest control expert.

5. IT'S TOO COLD FOR BED BUGS IN CANADA

Even with our cold winters bed bugs continue to survive in all parts of Canada. Bed bugs can be found in almost every country and region. Bed bugs are a global pest.

6. YOU CAN'T GET BED BUGS FROM A NEIGHBOUR AS LONG AS HE DOESN'T VISIT YOU AND KEEPS HIS DOOR SHUT.

Migration of bed bugs from a neighbour is a lot more common than people believe. In apartments or condos the risk of migration is greater because bed bugs can travel through cracks, vents or spaces in a shared wall. If you think your neighbour has an issue with bed bugs, check your bed and living area on a weekly basis to make sure bed bugs are detected at the earliest stages. Speak to your landlord or condo association. A building-wide effort to control bed bugs is needed.

7. YOU CAN'T HAVE BED BUGS WHEN YOU HAVE NOT TRAVELLED ANYWHERE RECENTLY

Travel, whether overseas or in Canada, is not the only possible source of bed bugs. We find it hard to imagine where we might have picked up bed bugs. Yet situations such as a trip abroad, riding public transit, having a houseguest or purchasing a piece of second hand furniture can offer bed bugs a free ride into your home or apartment.

8. IT CAN'T BE BED BUGS BECAUSE YOU GET BITTEN BUT YOUR PARTNER DOES NOT

The simple fact is that two people sleeping in the same bed may both be bitten by bed bugs but respond in a different way. Some people immediately have a reaction to the bites while others show little or no sign.

9. BED BUGS ARE RESISTANT TO ALL PESTICIDES

Bed bugs are not resistant to all pesticides, but they are becoming increasingly resistant to over used pesticides. Home pesticide sprays or foggers do not work on bed bugs. Pest control companies continue to develop new ways to treat bed bugs. It is best to let a trained and licensed bed bug pest control expert select and apply the right pesticide.

10. THERE ARE OVER THE COUNTER BUG SPRAYS OR REMEDIES THAT WILL GET RID OF BED BUGS.

Over the counter bug spray, rubbing alcohol, and kerosene are some of the home remedies being used to try to eradicate bed bugs. However, such home remedies are considered to be ineffective and some are fire hazards. The best way to get rid of bed bugs is to hire a licensed pest control expert and follow their instructions.

11. IF YOU SLEEP IN A METAL BED YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT BED BUGS.

Although it is true that metal beds are less hospitable to bed bugs, simply replacing all beds with metal ones will not solve a bed bug problem. In some cases, metal beds may cause bed bugs to hide in less obvious areas of the bed, making the matter worse. And throwing out your metal bed will not simply solve the problem, but it could also expose others to an infestation.

12. YOU CAN GET SICK FROM BED BUG BITES

Bed bugs do not spread disease among humans. Bed bug bites can get infected if you scratch them excessively. Some people can develop allergic sensitivities to bed bug infestations. The most significant health effects appear to be the psychological, including stress, anxiety, depression, and fatigue that can be caused by the presence of bed bugs in the home.

BED BUG BITES

WHAT DO BED BUG BITES LOOK LIKE?

Bed bugs usually bite at night, and will bite all over a human body, especially around the face, neck, upper torso, arms and hands.

Individual responses to bed bug bites will vary. Some people do not react to bed bug bites. But for those who do, bite marks may appear within minutes or days, usually where skin is exposed during sleep. They can be small bumps or large itchy welts. Because the bites may resemble mosquito and other insect bites, a bump or welt alone does not mean there are bed bugs.

The most common rash is made up of localized red and itchy flat sores. Often bed bug bites appear as a group of three, which people sometimes call “breakfast, lunch, and dinner.”

Small raised red swelling bites are also common. In rare cases, some people may develop large raised, often itchy, red welts.



ARE BED BUG BITES A THREAT TO MY HEALTH?

Although bed bugs and their bites are a nuisance, they are not known to spread disease in humans. Bed bug bites can be very itchy and irritating. Most welts heal in a few days but in unusual cases, the welt may persist for several weeks.

The most significant health effects appear to be the psychological, including stress, anxiety, depression, and fatigue caused by the presence of bed bugs in the home. Anxiety about being bitten can lead to sleeplessness, which can affect one's wellbeing. Properly and effectively responding to bed bugs helps to reduce anxiety.

HOW DO I TREAT BED BUG BITES?

Most bed bug bites go away by themselves and don't need treatment. Keep the skin clean and try not to scratch. Usually an anti-itch ointment will help, but if bites become infected, you should see a doctor. If the bites are very itchy, your doctor may prescribe cream or antihistamines to relieve the itchiness. Oral antibiotics may be prescribed for any secondary skin infection from excessive scratching.

