

What you should know about...BED BUGS!

What are they? Bed bugs are insects that have an oval-shaped body and short broad head – similar to an apple seed, adults are 6-10 mm long, brown and wingless. The nymphs are similar shaped, but yellow-white in color. Nymph eggs are whitish, pear-shaped, and the size of a pinhead. Clusters of 10-50 eggs can be found in cracks and crevices. Bed bugs have a 1-year lifespan, and a female can lay 200-400 eggs that hatch in about 10 days.



How do you find them? Itchy welts on the skin, black or brown spots on mattresses, sheets, bed frames or other bedroom surfaces can indicate an infestation. They prefer dark areas, are inactive during the day, and can hide in extremely small spaces because of their flattened body. Because people travel more, they easily hitch rides on clothing and luggage.

What can they do? Bed bugs are not known for any serious health risks or to carry blood-borne diseases, and are not an indication of cleanliness. They cause itchy welts on the skin and allergic reactions. Bites may not be noticed immediately as they feed at night while people are asleep.

How can they be controlled? The simple solution is extermination with a pest control operator. As they are not easy to get rid of, repeat chemical applications may be required. An infested mattress may be steam cleaned using hot steam (avoid excessive moisture and the risk of mold), or vacuumed carefully with a brush attachment and the vacuum waste disposed of immediately. Be sure to also remove and check the cloth side underneath the box spring. Bed clothes should be washed in hot water and dried on the high heat setting. Bed bugs cannot fly, jump, or climb easily on metal or polished surfaces. Bed legs can be treated with double-sided tape, petroleum jelly, or placed inside glass jars or metal cans that have been treated. Smaller household items can be treated by either heating above 50°C (one method is to wrap the item in plastic and placing outdoors on a hot sunny day). Items can also be treated by freezing, by placing outdoors in the winter for a prolonged period of time (4 days below 0°C).

Tip for Prevention: Be cautious of taking second-hand furniture, bedding, or beds. Inspect and clean second-hand items thoroughly before bringing into your home. When travelling, inspect the mattress and headboard, and try not to bring blankets and pillows from home into a hotel room. Keep your suitcase elevated by using a luggage stand with metal legs. You can

also keep your suitcase wrapped and sealed in a garbage bag while in the hotel room.

