

BED BUGS

WHAT ARE THEY?
HOW TO GET
RID OF THEM!



**Hunterdon County
Department of Health**

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What are bed bugs?

Bed bugs are thin, brown, oval-shaped insects slightly smaller than a lady bug. These pests tend to be most active at night. They cannot fly or jump. But they crawl — quickly. To live, bed bugs bite humans.

Can bed bugs spread disease?

While bed bugs are not known to spread disease, their bites can cause serious itching.

How do bed bugs travel?

Bed bugs move from place to place by “hitchhiking” in items such as luggage, backpacks, even furniture. They can survive and thrive in a variety of spots: houses, apartments, hotel rooms, college dorms, etc..

How do I know if I have bed bugs in my home?

It can be difficult to determine if you have a bed bug problem because these insects feed at night and hide during the day. While bed bugs can be found in any area of the home, they typically live in the bedroom.

Look for bed bugs:

- In seams of mattresses
- Behind bed boards and bed frames
- Between cracks and crevices of walls and floor moldings
- Where carpeting adjoins walls
- In furniture and dresser drawers
- In seams of curtains that touch the floor.

What causes bed bug infestations?

Bed bug infestations are not caused by poor sanitary conditions. But untidy, cluttered environments and failure to detect an infestation early can make the bed bug problem worse over time. Recognizing the signs of bed bugs and taking immediate steps to reduce their population can greatly lessen the risk of a severe infestation.

Can bed bugs be transferred from one person to another?

Bed bugs generally are inactive during the day, so the possibility of transferring them from one person to another is very low. Remember, however, that bed bugs move from place to place by hitchhiking. Therefore, you should always check your luggage and related items when you travel. And, by all means, **do not** bring home discarded furniture. When buying used furniture, inspect it very closely before bringing it into your home.



How do I get rid of bed bugs?

To reduce bed bugs, eliminate their habitat. Start with a rigorous inspection of your home. For example, thoroughly examine the seams of bed mattresses by lifting up the lip along the outer edge of the mattress. If you see evidence of bed bugs, vacuum and clean carefully with diluted bleach solution (1 part bleach to 10 parts water). It may also help to vacuum and steam clean the carpet, paying close attention to where walls meet carpets. Also, wash walls and dresser drawers. Severely infested furniture should be discarded.

In the most serious cases of infestation, insecticide applications might be necessary. This should be done by a licensed pesticide applicator after infested areas have been cleaned as thoroughly as possible.