

Bed bug FAQ's

What do bed bugs look like?

The adult bed bug has a flattened body, an oval shape, is wingless, and is reddish\brownish in color. It is about 1/5 of an inch long, or the size of an apple seed. Nymphs are slightly smaller and are often yellowish in color unless having recently fed.

Where do bed bugs come from?

Bed bugs can be found throughout the world, and are constantly being transplanted due to the sale and transport of used furniture, clothing, luggage and other shipped goods.

What has caused the recent rise in bed bug activity?

In the last decade bed bug activity has increased dramatically due to several factors. Most sources cite the increased affordability of world travel and the popularity of oceanic cruising as key factors. Additionally, the expanding global marketplace has led to an increase in travel and shipping to-and-from developing areas of the world, where modern sanitation and public health are limited.

Can bed bugs be seen with the naked eye?

Yes, if there is a bed bug on you or crawling around on your sheets, you will likely see it. The problem is that bed bugs do not often just crawl around in the open. They stay well hidden in tight spaces during the day, and come out only at night for feeding; however, the nymph stages and eggs are quite small and very hard to see.

When are bed bugs most active?

Bed bugs are almost always active at night. When seen during daylight hours, it is assumed that the nesting area has been disturbed or that they are in extreme hunger.

Do bed bugs actually feed on human blood?

Yes, both adults and nymphs must feed on blood. A bed bug can take in six times its weight in human blood during a typical nighttime meal, and feeding can take from 3 to 12 minutes.

How long can bed bugs survive without a blood meal?

Nymphs can survive without food for up to 90 days without feeding; adults can survive up to one year or longer without feeding.

How will I know I have bed bugs?

You may suspect bed bugs if you wake up with bites or welts on your body that are itchy and sometimes painful, especially if this happens repeatedly. Other signs of infestation can be detected with a magnifying glass and a flashlight. A large bed bug population will produce a distinctively pungent odor.

What to look for:

1. Tiny black spots (feces) on linens or other objects.
2. Small red stains (blood) where bed bugs have been crushed.
3. Translucent light brown cast skins.
4. Live bed bugs.

How can I tell if I have been bitten by a bed bug?

While many insects such as spiders, fleas, ticks, & mosquitoes can leave bite marks, those of the bed bug will typically appear in straight rows of two or three bites. Always check with a healthcare professional for proper identification and treatment.

Will I get sick from bed bugs?

While bed bug bites are uncomfortable, they are not known to transmit disease and are not considered harmful. In some cases, bed bug bites can develop into painful welts that may last for several days. See a healthcare professional if this persists.

I've tried to control the bed bugs myself but I don't seem to get anywhere. When should I call a professional?

Even light or small infestations are not easy to control. If you feel uncomfortable with your efforts or they seem to be increasing out of your control, it is always best to call a Pest Management Professional.

Will a chemical treatment eliminate my problem immediately?

Most insects are safe within their egg shell, which protects them from pesticides. Depending on temperature, bed bug eggs can hatch anywhere from one-to-three weeks. This is why a follow-up inspection/treatment is suggested within ten-to-fourteen days of initial treatment. Most pesticides will leave a residual that will last for up to 30 days, which would insure an active residual upon eggs hatching.

Is there a trap or a non-chemical treatment available to stop the spread of bed bugs?

There are no traps that will reliably stop the spread of bed bugs and/or reduce or eliminate a current population. Non-chemical treatments, such as high-intensity heat and cold treatments have shown to be both reliable and effective.

I keep my home very clean. Where did the bed bugs come from?

Bed bugs, unlike roaches, are not sanitation driven, so a clean home is just as susceptible to bed bugs as an unclean one. All that is needed for an infestation to occur is for an infested item to be introduced into an un-infested environment. Bed bugs are most likely to be introduced upon returning from travel, particularly out of the country. They can also hitch a ride into your home on items purchased at secondhand stores or on furniture and bedding that is delivered to your home from an infested location. They are also likely to be found at any large gathering place, such as schools, busses, health clubs, and theaters.

Do I really need special mattress covers? Why not a regular cover?

For bed bug prevention and control, an ordinary mattress cover will not suffice. The reason for this is that newly hatched nymphs are extremely small and can escape or feed through the fibers of an ordinary cover. Nymphs are also able to find their way through the loose teeth of the zipper on ordinary covers unless it is specially designed. Using an ineffective casement that was not designed for bed bug control will actually prove more detrimental than not using one at all because it can offer them protected harborage areas. Specialty covers are designed to prevent entry and exit. If you have questions about that bedbug proof mattresses and box spring covers or where to obtain them, ask your Pest Professional for more information.

Once I start a control program how long will it take to achieve complete control?

You will see a significant improvement after the initial bed bug treatment. However, complete bedbug elimination takes patience, persistence, and time. Following an initial treatment you should schedule a follow-up inspection and treatment from ten and fourteen days after initial treatment. Regular inspections and periodic treatment can then be schedule on an as needed basis, or until all signs of infestation have been eliminated.