

STEPS TO STOP BED BUGS IN MULTI-UNIT HOUSING FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT BED BUGS

How do bed bugs spread?

The common bed bug (*Cimex lectularius*) climbs easily up any fabric, wood or paper surface by hooking tarsal claws around the fibers. Bed bugs walk rapidly from one unit to another in multi-unit housing passing under doors and along electrical wires and water pipes. Bed bugs often spread by “hitchhiking” on all types of household items, such as bedding, furniture, luggage, clothing, animal cages, picture frames and electronic devices. If a crack is big enough for a credit card, a bed bug may be hiding there.

What do bed bugs look like?

Adults of the common bed bug are reddish to dark brown in color with flattened bodies. They are about the size of an apple seed, ¼ inch long. They cannot fly but they can run very quickly. The white eggs are small enough to be hard to see glued in seams and cracks. The newly hatched nymphs are about the size of a pin and are light tan until they take a blood meal. After feeding the young nymphs look like walking poppy seeds. If the young nymphs are not moving, seeing them against a fabric or rough surface is very difficult.

What do bed bugs feed on?

Bed bugs eat only blood. The common bed bug prefers to feed on humans, but can feed on a wide range of warm-blooded animals including household pets. Bed bugs do not stay on the human or other host. They move from hiding places in bedding or other cracks and crevices to feed for 3 to 10 minutes on people at night. After feeding, they will not take another blood meal for about 1 week. Adults can live more than a year without a blood meal.

What are signs of infestation by bed bugs?

Look for the following:

- Red, welt-like bites that itch usually appearing in lines or clusters.
- Live bed bugs, eggs, molted skins, and dark brown or rusty spots (feces) on the bedding, mattress and box springs beginning at the head end of the bed and then move outward to include all furniture particularly sofas, carpeting, drapes, picture frames, baseboards, electric outlets, and electronic equipment.

What personal steps can be taken to avoid being bitten if bed bugs are in the building?

Sleep in a bed and make that bed a safe island. Pull bed away from wall. Clean the bed frame and encase the mattress/box springs in a bed bug proof cover. Place bed legs in CLIMBUP™ insect interceptors. Wash bed-clothing weekly followed by 20 minutes or more in the dryer. Check mattress for bed bugs when changing the bed-clothing. Do not allow bed-clothes to touch floor. Do not place luggage, backpacks or other items on bed.