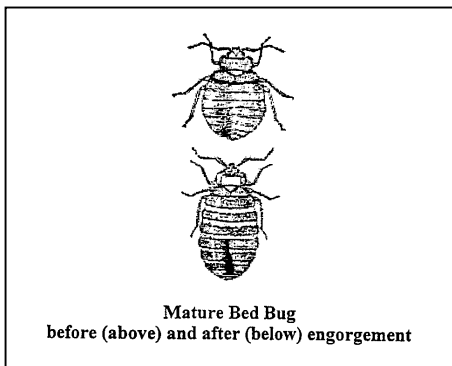


# Bedbugs

(Cimex Lectularius – Common Bedbugs)

## What are bedbugs?

Bedbugs are parasites from the insect family Cimicidae and include three species that feed on humans. Adult bedbugs are brown, flat and approximately 1/4-inch long, with a rounded look. After a feeding, the bedbugs become dark red, rounded (distended), and grow to 3/8-inch long. These fast-moving bugs usually come out at night or in darkened areas. The bedbugs lay small white eggs that hatch into transparent nymphs, which start feeding at the first opportunity. Adult bedbugs and nymphs feed on blood, usually human, but can feed on bats, small mammals and birds.



## Who gets bedbugs?

Bedbugs can affect people of all races, regardless of age or socioeconomic status.

## How are bedbugs spread?

Bedbugs may be found in a variety of locations. They can be found in theaters, old buildings, buses, trains, motels, etc.

## When and for how long is a person able to spread bedbugs?

Because of the bedbug's small size and inconspicuous nature, bedbugs can be brought

into homes on furniture, clothing, bed linen (seams or hemlines), luggage, firewood, etc. Nymphs and adult bedbugs generally feed at night and hide in crevices during the day. Common hiding places include seams in mattresses and box springs, cracks in bed frames, under loose wallpaper, behind picture frames, and inside furniture and upholstery. They can crawl but cannot fly or hop.

Bedbugs can go without feeding for eight to 140 days, depending upon the species. Older bugs can survive longer than younger ones without feeding. Adult bedbugs have survived without food for as long as 550 days. A temperature of 70 degrees Fahrenheit is ideal for bedbugs; only adult bedbugs are present at 50 degrees Fahrenheit or lower.

## Does past infection make a person immune?

No. You can get bedbugs more than once.

## What are the symptoms of bedbugs?

Bedbugs are not usually considered to be disease carriers. They do suck blood from their host. Saliva that is injected during the feeding can produce large swellings on the skin that itch and may become irritated and infected when scratched. Heavy infestations of bedbugs can produce a distinct odor on the item or in the area. Bedbugs also can leave fecal spots and or blood spots on bed sheets and around their hiding places.

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## **How is bedbug infestation diagnosed?**

Infestations are usually detected by the skin irritation caused by bites, usually limited to itching and inflammation.

Where infestations are heavy and people are bitten many times, the bites are so annoying that a person can lose considerable sleep and may suffer from iron and/or hemoglobin deficiencies due to the loss of blood.

## **What is the treatment for bedbugs?**

Because of the long life span of the bedbug, it is necessary to eliminate them. Elimination of a bedbug's infestation requires the careful use of pesticides. **To avoid toxicity to individuals and pets, it is best to contact a local pest control exterminator.**

## **What can be done to control the spread of bedbugs?**

- Control of a bedbug infestation requires the thorough inspection of living areas.
- Efforts should be made to locate and eliminate the source, such as furniture, firewood, mattresses and luggage.
- You also may need to repair cracks and crevices in living areas, which can be common hiding places for bedbugs.

*If you have any questions concerning the treatment of bedbugs, contact your local extension office and/or public health unit.*

