

Bedbug Awareness Fact Sheet

What are bedbugs?

- Bedbugs are small, wingless insects that have an oval, broad, flat body and a short, broad head. Adult bedbugs are usually four to five millimeters in length and will increase in size by a few millimeters after a blood meal.
- After feeding, adult bedbugs change from brown to a dark red colour.



- A female bedbug lays several hundred eggs in her lifetime. The white eggs are usually about one millimeter in length and can be very difficult to see. The eggs usually hatch in six to 17 days.
- There are three stages of life for a bedbug: egg, nymph and adult.
- **Bedbugs have not been known to transmit disease.** However, the bites may cause itchiness and people dealing with an infestation may experience stress, anxiety and loss of sleep.

Where are bedbugs found?

- Bedbugs are found all over the world, often in hotels, motels, homeless shelters, work camps, apartments, private homes and sometimes in businesses or offices.
- In recent years, bedbug infestations have increased in number worldwide, possibly due to:
 - Increased human travel
 - Difficulty identifying infestations
 - Lack of information about how to prevent or control the spread of bedbugs
 - Changes to pesticide use
 - Resistance to chemical control measures
- Bedbugs prefer dark, cool places such as bedding and along the seams of mattresses where they can easily feed and hide.
- Other favorite hiding places for bedbugs are underneath wallpaper, behind picture frames, in electrical outlets and crevices in walls and furniture.

How do bedbugs spread?

- Bedbugs spread when infested items such as clothing, mattresses, books, pictures, electronics, backpacks, luggage or furniture are moved from one location to another.

How do I prevent bedbugs from entering my home?

- **Know what a bed bug looks like and where to look for them.**
- **Be mindful of possible sources of bedbugs**
 - Closely inspect items such as used books, furniture, clothing, and garage sale and antique store purchases for the presence of bedbugs.
 - Ensure new mattresses are completely sealed in plastic before accepting them into your home, as used mattresses are often in the same delivery truck which can lead to infestation of the new items.
 - If helping someone move, inspect the items before placing them in your vehicle and be sure to inspect your vehicle after the move.
- **Reduce or remove places where bedbugs can hide**
 - Declutter to minimize hiding places.
 - Vacuum often and thoroughly, including under all furniture and mattresses.
 - Seal cracks, baseboards and other areas where bedbugs might hide.
- **Take precautions when travelling**
 - Before you leave:
 - When reserving accommodations, inquire about the presence of bedbugs in the facility.
 - Pack large white garbage bags in the event you need to separate some of your belongings while travelling.
 - Use light coloured plastic luggage as bedbugs are less attracted to light colours and plastic surfaces. Cloth luggage may be sealed in plastic to protect it from becoming infested.
 - Do not travel with your pillow as this gives bedbugs a chance to come home with you.
 - At your destination:
 - Before bringing luggage into the hotel room, be sure to inspect the room.
 - Alternatively, you may place your luggage in the tub while you check your rooms as bedbugs have difficulty climbing up smooth, polished or metal surfaces.
 - Be sure to inspect: linens, mattress seams, bed frames, nearby furniture and under carpet edges for live insects or evidence of bedbugs. A UV flashlight can help locate the insects and their droppings. Look for tiny blackish-red spots and smears on sheets and mattresses, which may be their droppings.
 - If you identify a problem, request another room or relocate to another hotel. Be sure to inspect your belongings to ensure you are not relocating bedbugs from one location to another.
 - Infested clothing and any other items that may be infested should be treated to kill the insects. Place them in a hot dryer for 30 minutes to kill all stages of bedbugs.
 - When you return home:
 - Before bringing your luggage into your home, place it on a smooth hard surface, e.g. driveway or garage floor, which will make it easy to detect any bedbugs that may have come home with you.
 - Inspect all your belongings carefully.
 - Wash all fabric items, whether worn or not, in hot water and then place the items in the dryer at the highest setting for 30 minutes. Older dryers or drying large items such as comforters may require longer drying times.
 - Place non-washable items in the dryer at the highest setting for 30 minutes. All stages of bedbugs will be destroyed.
 - Vacuum your luggage and place the vacuum bag in a plastic bag and in the trash. Wash any attachments and the interior cavity of the vacuum cleaner in hot water and detergent.

How do I know if bedbugs have entered my home?

- Some indicators that bedbugs are established in your home include:
 - Bites resembling flea or mosquito bites
 - Dark, reddish brown stains on sheets or mattresses
 - Black droppings on sheets or mattresses
 - Cast off skins from nymphs
 - Live or dead bedbugs
 - A sweet fruity smell if the infestation is heavy.
- If bedbugs are found, refer to the “Bedbug Infestation Fact Sheet” and if necessary, seek the services of a pest control professional.

Additional Information

Questions regarding bedbugs may be directed to the [public health inspector](#) in your [health region](#).

For more information, visit Health Canada’s website at:

http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pubs/pest/_fact-fiche/bedbug_room-punaises_chambre/index-eng.php

Sources: Health Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada, Toronto Public Health, Regina Qu’Appelle Health Region