

Bedbug Infestation 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.

What happens when bedbugs bite?

- Bedbug bites can happen anywhere on the skin but most often on the face, neck, arms, legs, and chest and most often during sleep.
- The bites look similar to and may be mistaken for flea or mosquito bites.
- When a bedbug bites, saliva is injected into the skin which may cause a localized reaction, i.e. red lumps or an allergic reaction in rare cases.
- Most bedbug bites will heal with time and do not require medical attention.
- Bites may itch and scratching can result in an infection. Antiseptic creams and antihistamines may relieve the itchiness of the bites.
- Seek the advice of a health care provider for severe reactions to bites or for secondary infections.

What do I do if bedbugs are in my home?

- An infestation does not mean that the home or facility is not being cleaned adequately but regular inspection and cleaning may help prevent an infestation.
 - Call your local public health inspector or a professional pest control operator to assist in bedbug identification and to confirm the infestation.
 - Professional pest control is often the best option to eradicate a bedbug infestation.
 - If an infestation is heavy, the room may have a sweet fruity smell.
 - Tenants are encouraged to notify the landlord immediately after confirmation of an infestation.
 - Tenants may also contact the local public health inspector for assistance in dealing with bed bug infestations in rental accommodations.
 - Bedbugs are very hard to eradicate, but there are some steps that can be taken to help address the problem.
 - Remove clutter and eliminate hiding places.
 - Discard infested items that cannot be cleaned.
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- Thoroughly vacuum corners, baseboards, box springs, mattresses, floors and any furniture near the bed. Ensure to dispose of the vacuum bag in a plastic bag. Clean the inside of the vacuum cleaner with hot water and soap.
- Use double-sided tape or glue paper placed around walls, the legs of a bed or other locations to trap the bedbugs.
- Use petroleum jelly around the legs of furniture to stop the bedbugs from climbing up them.
- Wash all fabric items 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.
- Consider covering clean pillows and mattresses with plastic covers.
- Use a stiff brush to dislodge bedbugs and their eggs from mattresses.
- Steam clean infested mattresses and other furniture.
- Remove or repair loose or peeling wallpaper.
- Tighten loose electrical face plates.
- Pesticides can be an effective solution to a bedbug infestation but may not kill all stages of bedbugs.
- Pyrethrin aerosols may be used in cracks and crevices to treat for bedbugs but may require multiple applications until all the eggs have hatched. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions to safely apply pesticides.
- Consider the services of a professional pest control company for heavy infestations.

What do I do if the building I live in has a bedbug infestation?

- Eliminating bedbug infestations in multi-unit complexes such as apartments or condominiums that share common walls can be challenging. If you are aware of an infestation in your building, adhere to the following:
 - **Educate yourself** – Learn how to prevent, identify and treat bedbugs.
 - **Monitor** – Check for bites on your body and blood stains on bedding and clothing.
 - **Get rid of clutter** – Bedbugs thrive in a cluttered environment.
 - **Pest-proof your home** – Eliminate bedbug hiding places by sealing gaps in walls. Use caulking to seal baseboards and trim. Expandable foam sprayed in areas around drains and water pipes can prevent entry. Use kick plates and weather stripping on doors to prevent the entry of bedbugs.
 - **Take action right away** – If you find any evidence of bedbugs, immediately contact your landlord or property management and ask for pest control treatment.
 - **Be prepared** – Thorough and proper preparation before professional pest control treatment is essential to successful bedbug control.
 - **Make your bed an island** – Ensure that your mattress, box spring, and pillows have plastic coverings. Remove bed skirts and make sure sheets do not touch the floor. Keep the bed 10 cm away from the wall and place petroleum jelly around each leg of the bedframe to prevent the bedbugs from crawling up the legs of the bed.

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-punaies_chambre/index-eng.php

Sources:

Health Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada, Toronto Public Health, Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region