

How can I prevent bed bugs?

Preventing bed bugs can be difficult, especially in homes that have many cracks and crevices, or loose wallpaper.

Indirect measures can go a long way in controlling bed bugs: wash bedding and mattress pads, and clean furnishings.

Prevent bed bugs from getting into homes by removing debris from around the house, repairing cracks in walls, and caulking windows and doors. Inspect any furniture being brought into your home for bed bugs. When returning from a trip inspect your luggage and clothes for bed bugs.

Simple methods include coating the legs of beds with petroleum jelly or double-sided tape so bed bugs will not be able to climb onto the bed. Putting the legs of the bed frame in empty cans or glass jars also help since bed bugs cannot fly or jump.

Photos courtesy of the CDC.



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What You Need to
Know About

BED BUGS



CRAWFORD COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

PREVENT • PROMOTE • PROTECT

What are bed bugs?

Bed bugs are a wingless insect that feed off of the blood of humans and other mammals. They are 1/4 inch in length with a flattened oval shape and they are rusty brown in color.

Bed bugs may be found in homes, movie theaters, transportation depots, and restrooms, but are being seen more and more in apartments, hotels, homes, shelters, dormitories and nursing homes. Anyone who comes in direct contact with bed bugs can carry them into their homes because they are easily transported through clothing, second-hand furniture or bedding, suitcases, boxes or even hair.



How do you know if you have bed bugs?

Small rusty spots on mattresses and bed linens are usually the first sign of a bed bug infestation. These spots are actually bed bug droppings and blood spots.

Red itchy welts on the skin caused by bed bug “bites” are another indication of an infestation. Bed bug “bites” occur when the bed bug is actually drawing blood. It may take as long as 14 days for a welt to appear. For the most part, bed bugs only feed in the dark. During the day, they hide in dark cracks or crevices.

What is the treatment for bed bugs “bites”?

Bed bugs do not carry any human diseases. Suggestions to treat the bites include:

- Resist the urge to scratch. Scratching may only intensify the itch and cause an infection.
- Wash the bites with antiseptic soap to reduce the risk of infection.
- Apply an ice pack frequently to help relieve swelling.
- See your health care provider if you develop an infection.



How can I get rid of bed bugs?

Complete elimination of a bed bug infestation may be difficult without the services of a knowledgeable Pest Control Service. It may even take as many as five or more treatments to gain control of an infestation.

Do-it-yourself measures used by homeowners and renters sometimes cause more problems than benefits.

Tips for effective treatment:

- Reduce the amount of clutter to achieve a good treatment and eliminate hiding places
- Vacuum mattresses, box springs and carpets, and dispose vacuumed contents in a sealed plastic bag
- Cover mattress and box spring with plastic covers
- Wash bedding and garments in hot (120° F) water
- Put clothing in a hot dryer for at least five minutes to kill bed bugs