



Customer Bulletin

Good Night, Sleep Tight, Don't Let The Bed Bugs Bite!



Actual Size 3/8"

HISTORY

For much of recorded history, bed bugs (*Cimex lectularius*) have been recognized as one of the most hated household pests. They were first introduced to the New World by early colonists. Bed bugs were quite common in the U.S. prior to World War II, but declined in incidence after the mid 20th century primarily due to the widespread use of synthetic insecticides such as DDT. Improvements in sanitation and personal hygiene, along with more vigilant regulation and consumer knowledge about the use of second-hand furniture are also likely contributors to bed bugs becoming known to most of us only through a children's nursery rhyme.

Although never totally eliminated, bed bug populations dwindled enough for most of us to ignore them. That has changed. Bed bugs have undergone a dramatic resurgence worldwide, and in the past decade bed bugs have begun making a comeback across the United States, in many areas becoming a major nuisance pest. International travel and commerce are factors in the recent spread of these insect hitchhikers, which can be readily transported in luggage, clothing, bedding, and

furniture. There are some experts that believe the small population that remained in the U.S. after the 1950's were 'super bugs', resistant to the chemicals available to treat them. Many experts consider bed bugs' resistance to pesticides a major factor in their current growth in populations.

BED BUG BIO

Bed bugs are parasites that preferentially feed on humans. Bed bugs do not fly or hop, but are fast moving insects that are nocturnal blood-feeders, gorging themselves while their host is asleep. The bite itself is painless. The salivary fluid injected by bed bugs typically causes the skin to become irritated and inflamed, although individuals differ in their sensitivity. Older people often do not have a significant reaction to the bites, and can often live with infestations that go unnoticed until a caregiver or relative is bitten. Those who are highly allergic can experience severe reactions. The bite is usually accompanied by severe itching that lasts for several hours to days. The amount of blood loss due to bed bug feeding typically does not adversely affect the host. No scientific evidence links bed bugs to the spread of any disease.

LIFE CYCLE

Female bed bugs lay from one to seven eggs per day, which hatch in 6 to 17 days. Bed bugs are very temperature dependent, and at lower temperatures the hatching times are extended. Nymphs can immediately begin to feed, requiring a blood meal in order to molt. Bed bugs reach maturity after five molts. Developmental time (egg to adult) is also affected by temperature and takes anywhere between 21 to 120 days. The cooler it is, the longer this process takes. Nymphs may become engorged with blood within three minutes, whereas the adult usually feeds for ten to fifteen minutes. The adult's lifespan may encompass 12-18 months, with three or more generations occurring each year. If no host is available, nymphs and adults can actually live for several months without food, again with varying times depending on temperature. At 73 degrees Fahrenheit, the maximum length of life is about 135 days. Drop the temperature to 44 degrees, and that can jump as high as 550 days.

**BED BUG (*Cimex Lectularius*)**

Providing you with valuable information for your protection...

SIGNS OF INFESTATION



MATTRESS



CUSHION



BASEBOARD

Because bed bugs are so adept at hiding, you may not see the bugs. However, a bed bug infestation can be recognized by blood stains from crushed bugs or by rusty (sometimes dark) spots of excrement on sheets and mattresses, bed clothes, walls, and furniture. Fecal spots, egg cases, and shed skins may be found in the vicinity of their hiding places. Use of a flashlight helps in visual detection in hidden cracks and crevices. The most effective inspection is made by a certified bed bug dog, trained to alert its handler when the dog discovers the scent of live bugs or eggs.

HABITS

Bed bugs hide during the day in dark, protected sites. Despite their name, the attractant is not the bed itself but the warm blooded person that lays in it quietly for hours at a time, so they can be anywhere a host is nearby. Bed bugs usually inhabit seams, tufts, and folds of mattresses, later spreading to crevices in the bedstead. In heavier infestations, they may occupy hiding places farther from the bed, hiding in window and door frames, electrical boxes, floor cracks, baseboards, furniture, and under the tack board of wall-to-wall carpeting. Bed bugs will crawl upward to hide in pictures, wall hangings, drapery pleats, loosened wallpaper, cracks in plaster, and ceiling moldings. They can rapidly spread through a multiple residence building, hotel or other accommodations, as a small percentage of the infestation is usually found moving away from the host!

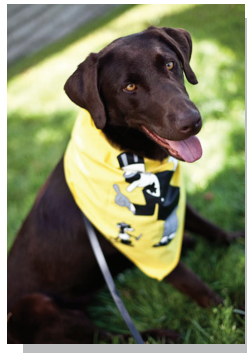
PREVENTION

The mobile nature of bed bugs limits their prevention. Avoidance is especially challenging in hotels, motels, and apartments because occupants and their belongings are constantly changing, which affords many opportunities for the bugs to be introduced. Everyone should be wary of acquiring secondhand beds, bedding, and furniture. At a minimum, such items should be examined closely before being brought into the home. When traveling, it's prudent to examine the bed and headboard area for signs of the bugs, and elevate luggage off the floor. If your room does have a problem, notify hotel management immediately and move to another room. Make sure the new room is not immediately adjacent to (including above or below) the infested room that you are departing.

WHAT WESTERN CAN DO FOR YOU

Bed bugs are unique pests that cannot be managed through typical pest control practices of eliminating harborages or food sources with minimum disruption. Those inexperienced in pest control cannot successfully find and treat for bed bugs. Although we can provide visual bed bug inspections, we strongly recommend a canine inspection as the quickest and most accurate barometer to finding bed bugs. The key to eliminating the infestation is enlisting the services of pest control professionals who understand the habits and biology of the bed bug, and can find and treat all places where bugs and eggs may be present.

Note: Due to the extended time required and the intricacy of the work necessary for bed bug control, this service is provided as an additional program outside of our regular pest control agreement.



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