

# BED BUGS

## MYTHS About Bed Bugs

**MYTH:** Bed bugs are too small to see.

**FACT:** Although they may be difficult to find because they hide well, bed bugs are big enough to be seen with the naked eye. Bed bugs look similar to an apple seed in size and appearance.

**MYTH:** Bed bugs are only found in shelters; only poor people or dirty people get them.

**FACT:** Bed bugs can be found in hotels, motels, dormitories, apartments, condos, private homes and even in some public places, such as businesses and offices. Anyone can get bed bugs.

**MYTH:** Walking into a room that has bed bugs means you will get bed bugs.

**FACT:** Bed bugs do not jump. They spend 90% of their time hiding and are usually active at night. Bed bugs avoid light and do not like to be disturbed.

**MYTH:** Bed bugs cause disease.

**FACT:** Bed bugs are not considered a health hazard and do not transmit disease. Bed bug bites, however, can cause an allergic reaction in some people similar to a mosquito bite. Frequent scratching of the bite marks or picking the scabs can cause infections. People with severe and/or repeated infestations can feel anxious, worried or ashamed.

**MYTH:** Chemicals/pesticides will kill bed bugs.

**FACT:** Pesticide application alone will not kill bed bugs at all stages. Successful treatment depends on an Integrated Pest Management approach to bed bug control which involves vacuuming, steaming and laundering belongings and sealing areas and gaps where bed bugs can hide. Do not use over the counter pest control products or home remedies such as kerosene.

### QUICK FACTS:

Bed bugs can be found all over the world: in many cities and towns, in homes, stores, offices and public places.

Bed bugs feed on the blood of animals or birds, but they prefer people.

Adult bed bugs can live for up to a year without feeding.

Usually bed bugs live for 6 to 9 months.

The eggs hatch about 10 days after they are laid.

They usually hide during the day and come out at night to feed.

Bed bugs can't fly or jump, but can walk as quickly as an ant.

Bed bugs are attracted to body heat, and the air people exhale.

Bed bugs can travel from place to place on clothing, and personal belongings like luggage, knapsacks, computer bags and purses.

# Avoiding Bed Bug 'Hitch Hikers'

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Sometimes people can get bed bugs from visiting clients or friends or making service calls at locations that have had a bed bug infestation. No one wants to pick up and bring home (or to another location) unwanted pesty passengers.

There are two ways to get bed bugs - migration and hitch hiking. Migration is when bed bugs walk to an adjacent unit through hallways, plumbing, electrical lines, or other means. Hitch hiking is when bed bugs climb into or on bags, clothing, or other belongings and are relocated by a person.



## Some bed bug biology to consider:

- Bed bugs feed at night and hide during the day (90% of their life is spent in hiding areas)
- Bed bugs prefer dark areas
- Bed bugs tend to hide near the bed or where the person normally sleeps
- Bed bugs are unlikely to be active during the day
- Bed bugs are large enough to be seen with the naked eye (an adult is 6mm long)
- Bed bugs do not fly or jump

## The following practices will help prevent picking up bed bug hitch hikers in areas with known or suspected infestations:

- Learn how to identify bed bugs (see photo)
- When visiting, bring in only what you need and avoid placing bags close to walls and furniture (if this is unavoidable, place belongings in a closed white plastic kitchen bag and examine it for any bed bugs before leaving)
- If possible, stand rather than sit, or avoid sitting on furniture with fabric - wood or metal chairs are better
- Inspect shoes, clothing and belongings after leaving
- If you find any bed bugs, kill them immediately
- Put work clothes in the dryer for at least 30 minutes on high heat when you get home
- Use disposable protective clothing such as shoe covers and coveralls