

# A Guide to Bed Bug Safety

## The Basics

### **Protect your belongings!**

Bed bugs like to ride on personal items like jackets and bags. Bed bugs rarely climb onto a moving body.

Limit the number of items you carry with you. If you enter an area you think might have bed bugs, do not place your belongings on the floor or on furniture. Seal these items in plastic bags or plastic bins when you stay in a suspected area for any length of time.

Place clothing and belongings in a clothes dryer when you get home to kill any bed bugs and their eggs. Keep the dryer on high heat for at least 20 minutes.

## For More Information

The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, or CDC, has information about bed bugs here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/bedbugs/index.html>

The Environmental Protection Agency, or EPA, has information about bed bugs here:

<https://www.epa.gov/bedbugs/>



Department of  
**Public Health**

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

## About Bed Bugs

Bed bugs (*Cimex Lectularius*) are small insects that feed on human and animal blood. They are most active when people are asleep. Bed bugs can get into your home by attaching themselves to used furniture and personal items like bags and clothing.

You may not notice bed bugs because they hide in cracks when they are not feeding. Bug sprays and pesticides alone are not enough to get rid of bed bugs. The best way to treat a bed bug problem is to use both non-chemical and chemical methods.



# How Do I Recognize Bed Bugs?

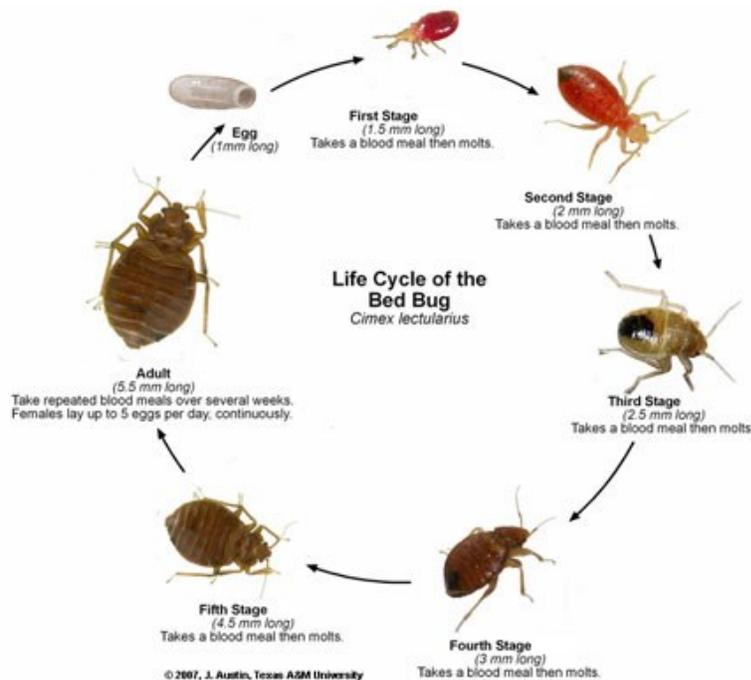
You can recognize bed bugs from their:

- Droppings and blood stains on mattresses or furniture
- Appearance

Bed bugs have three basic life stages: egg, nymph, and adult.

An adult bed bug is about the size of an apple seed, oval shaped, rusty brown in color, wingless, and as thin as a credit card. Bed bug nymphs are smaller and clear or tan in color. Bed bugs that have just fed will be swollen and stretched out. All bed bugs have six legs and two antennae.

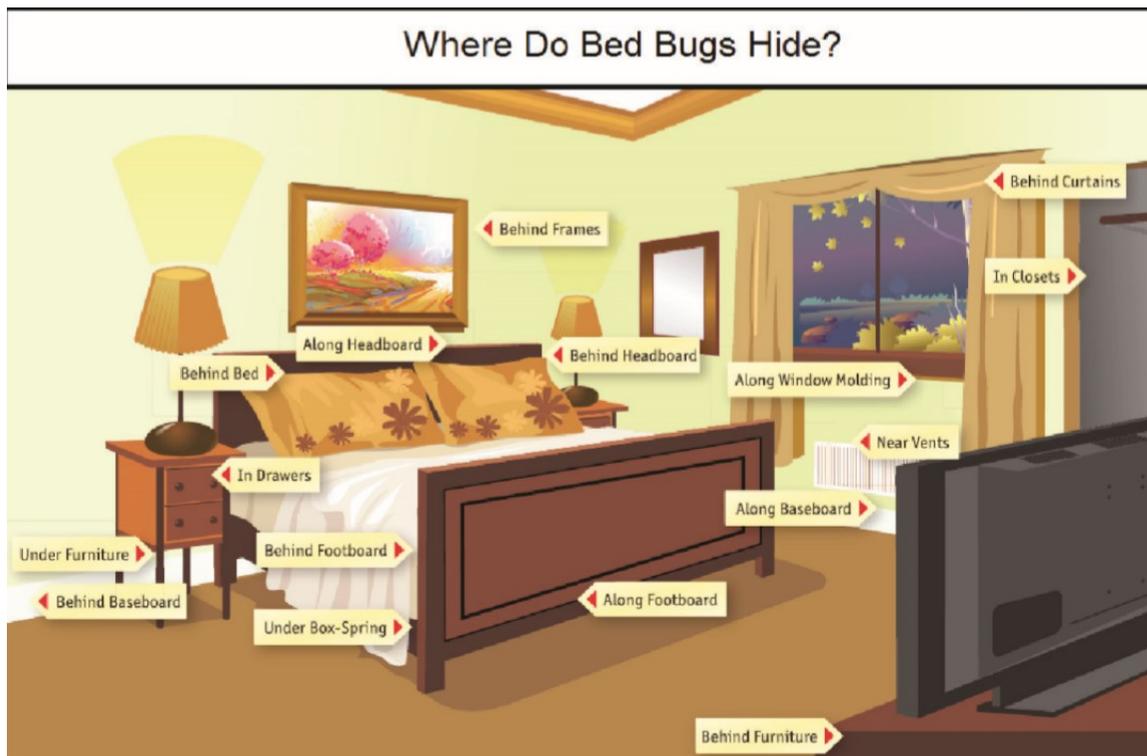
Many common household insects can be mistaken for bed bugs. Proper identification is required to provide the correct treatment.



# How Do I Inspect My Home For Bed Bugs?

Despite their name, bed bugs do not live only in beds. They can be found almost anywhere in your home that provides a place to hide. Any crack or crevice with an opening as thin as a credit card can provide a hiding place.

You can often find where bed bugs are hiding by looking for black or brown spots on and around surfaces where they rest. Eggs and shed skin casings will also be found near these areas. Bed bugs do not hide in brightly lit areas. Be sure to use a flashlight, magnifying glass, and crevice tool to help you with your inspection.



# Places Bed Bugs Are Commonly Found

- Mattresses and box springs
- Bed frames & head boards
- Night stands and dressers
- Curtains
- Window and door frames
- Pictures and picture frames
- Loose wallpaper and peeling paint
- Hard and upholstered furniture
- Behind baseboards and electrical outlets
- Joints in hard wood floors
- Crevices behind molding
- Any other places that provide a dark, narrow crevice

# How Do I Find A Reliable Pest Control Professional

- Call several licensed and insured pest management companies and get written estimates.
- Insist on and check references.
- Look for companies that offer both chemical and non-chemical control.
- Insist on pre-inspection as part of the estimate process.
- Technicians should be willing to talk with you about treatment options and guarantees.
- An effective bed bug control plan should take multiple treatments and inspections. Make sure these are covered in the estimate.
- Compare warranties and guarantees.
- The best way to get rid of bed bugs is to hire a professional pest control company with experience in bed bug control. If you do not use a professional, you can use products or procedures described on the following pages to control bed bugs.

# What You Can Do to Help Your Pest Control Professional

## **Vacuuming**

Vacuum cracks and crevices on a regular basis. Take your time. Use the crevice tool attachment to remove the largest number of bugs and eggs. Do not use a bristle attachment, which may transfer eggs from one room to another. You should also vacuum mattresses before you purchase mattress encasements (see below). Vacuums do not kill bed bugs or their eggs, so be sure to empty the bag or canister into a sealed trash bag after you vacuum.

## **Sealing**

Bed bugs can travel between row homes through small openings and areas with wires and cables. Protect yourself by sealing wall/floor junctures with caulk to prevent bed bugs from traveling through. Install foam padding behind electrical outlet faceplate covers to create a tight seal.

## **Mattress Encasements**

It is a bad idea to throw out your mattress at the first sign of bed bugs. Bed bugs will follow you wherever you sleep. It is a better idea to use the money you would need to buy new mattress to hire a professional pest management company. You can use bed bug encasements to protect both mattresses and box springs.

Encasements reduce hiding spots and make it easier to detect an infestation. Be sure to purchase an encasement made for bed bugs. Allergen covers will not work. Always check the encasement from time to time for any rips or tears.

# What You Can Do To Help Your Pest Control Professional (continued)

## **Cleaning**

When you see a blood spot, clean it up right away. Cleaning up blood spots will make it easier to detect new bed bugs and provide a more sanitary home environment.

General cleaning will also remove bed bugs and eggs. Cleaning can also help you to tell the difference between roaches and bed bugs. Bed bug excrement will smear reddish brown before washing away.

## **Laundry**

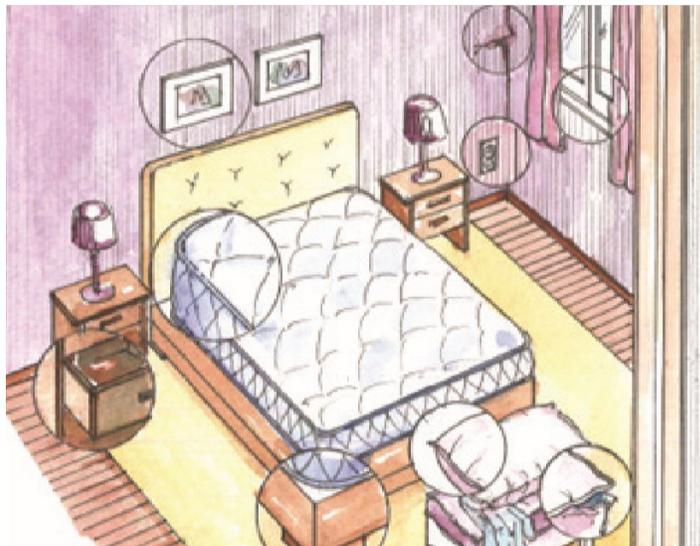
Laundering items on the hottest setting will kill bed bugs and eggs. You should allow items to dry on the hottest setting for at least 20 minutes after they appear to be fully dry. Pillows, comforters and other thick items may take longer. After laundering, store items in airtight bags to prevent re-infestation.

# How Do I Control Bed Bugs?

- Do not bring discarded bed frames, mattresses, box springs or upholstered furniture found on the street into your home.
- Check all used or rented furniture for bed bugs.
- While traveling, inspect the bed and furniture.
- Keep suitcases off the floor and bed, and inspect them before you leave.
- If you suspect you have been around bed bugs, immediately wash and dry your clothing on the hot settings.

# What Not To Do When Dealing With Bed Bugs

- Do not relocate to another area of the house. Bed bugs will follow their host and may infest new areas of your house.
- Do not use a total release fogger for bed bug control. Foggers will spread an infestation to other areas of your home and possibly to neighboring properties.
- Do not turn up the thermostat to kill bed bugs. A home furnace will not reach the required temperatures to kill bed bugs.
- Do not bag up furniture and leave it outside during winter months. Freezing temperatures may not kill all bed bugs and their eggs.
- Do not throw out your furniture at the first sighting of bed bugs. Most furniture can be treated by a professional to remove bed bugs and eggs.



# What Must Landlords Do?

## **If you are a landlord, to rent a property in Philadelphia you must:**

- Develop a written Bed Bug Control Plan that follows best practices as defined by the National Pest Management Association and follow it;
- Give this brochure to your tenant before you enter into a new lease; and;
- Inform the tenant in writing before you enter into a new lease about any bed bug infestation in the rental unit in the previous 120 days and what steps were taken to remediate it. If there was no infestation during that time, you must inform the tenant of this in writing.

## **If you are a landlord and you receive a complaint that one of your rental units is (or is reasonably suspected to be) infested with bed bugs, you must:**

- Acknowledge the complaint within five days;
- Have a pest management professional investigate the rental unit for the presence of bed bugs within 10 days;
- If there is an infestation, remediate the rental unit until a pest management professional determines that there is no evidence of bed bugs in the unit;
- In buildings with four or more units, have a pest management professional investigate the rental units above, below, and adjacent to the unit about which you received the complaint;

*(continued on next page)*

## What Must Landlords Do? (continued)

- Provide tenants with at least 24-hours notice before entering a unit to inspect, remediate or monitor it for bed bugs;
- Provide any tenants in units affected by a bed bug complaint a written notice of the pest management professional's determination of whether there is a bed bug infestation within five business days of when you receive it;
- Provide all tenants in a building notification of results of an investigation of the presence of bed bugs in common areas of that building;
- Obtain bed bug monitoring services for 12 months after an infestation has been remediated, and if the unit is leased to a new tenant during the monitoring period, explain the monitoring activities to the new tenant and continue monitoring; and
- Maintain a written record for two years of all bed bug complaints and control measures provided, including reports of chemicals and other remedies used by the pest management professional and any other reports prepared by the pest management professional.

### **Who Must Pay for Remediation?**

The landlord is responsible for hiring pest control professionals to investigate bed bug complaints and eliminate infestations. The landlord is responsible for the full cost if the infestation is reported within 365 days after "lease commencement" (the first day you are permitted to live in the rental unit) or within 180 days after bed bugs were found in an adjoining unit. After this time period, the landlord and tenant share in reasonable costs for the pest control services.

Exception: A tenant who lives in housing managed by the Philadelphia Housing Authority or who pays rent with government vouchers or subsidies is not responsible for a share of the costs.



# What Must Tenants Do?

## **In Philadelphia, if you are a tenant, you must:**

- Not knowingly bring into the building furniture or other personal items that are infested with bed bugs;
- Notify your landlord in writing within five business days if you suspect that your unit or a building common area is infested with bed bugs;
- Cooperate with any reasonable recommendations made by a pest management professional hired by the landlord to investigate and remediate a bed bug infestation, including:
  - ◆ Allowing the pest management professional to come into your rental unit at reasonable times to inspect for bed bugs or remediate the bed bugs;
  - ◆ Not interfering with the pest management professional's inspections or remediation efforts;
  - ◆ Preparing your unit for treatment, such as cleaning or moving furniture, as recommended by the pest management professional; and
  - ◆ Carrying out other reasonable recommendations of the pest management professional.