
Bed Bugs

What are they?

- Bed bugs are tiny (4 to 5 mm long) insects that have a flat head and oval body.
- Young bed bugs are yellowish white and change to reddish brown as they age.
- Bed bugs cannot fly or jump, but can crawl quickly into small spaces.
- Bed bugs feed on blood and usually bite at night or in the dark.
- Bites often cause a welt on the skin that becomes irritated, inflamed and itchy.
- Itchiness can last for weeks and with scratching may lead to skin infections.
- Bed bugs do not spread disease.

How are they spread?

- Clothing and luggage through travel, second hand beds, bedding materials, and furniture can spread bedbugs.
- Bed bugs can hide in crevices of mattresses, molding, behind outlets and inside light fixtures.
- Bed bugs can multiply rapidly and quickly infest your home.

Is there treatment for them?

- Your doctor will decide if you need treatment from the bites of bed bugs.

What can be done to prevent their spread?

- Learn how to identify bed bugs. If you find any bed bugs, kill them right away.
- Ensure that second-hand items have been carefully inspected before you bring them into your home. Wash clothing and linens in hot water and dry in a hot dryer.

- **Use caution when traveling/visiting to make sure your luggage is not contaminated:**
 - Only bring in items that you need and make sure to avoid placing bags next to the floor, furniture or walls (if this is unavoidable, place items in a closed white plastic kitchen bag and inspect items carefully before returning home).
 - Inspect shoes, clothing and belongings after a trip. Wash clothing and linens in hot water and dry in a hot dryer.

If bed bugs have been found

- Put personal clothing and bedding in an airtight sealed bag until it can be washed.
- Wash all clothing and bedding in a very hot water and dry on a hot cycle in the dryer for 20 minutes or more.
- Furniture should be overturned, inspected and cleaned.
- Vacuuming and steam cleaning may also be done.
- Vacuum bags or canisters should be thrown away or emptied outside of the area right away to prevent bed bugs from returning.
- The best method of removing bed bugs is by a certified pest control company. Check the internet for local information.

For more information visit:

Hamilton Public Health

<http://www.hamilton.ca/HealthandSocialServices/PublicHealth/BedBugs.htm>

**Stop the spread of germs and infection.
Clean your hands.**



This fact sheet provides basic general information only and is to be used as a quick guide, not as a complete resource on the subject. If you have any further questions, ask Infection Prevention & Control or your health care provider.