

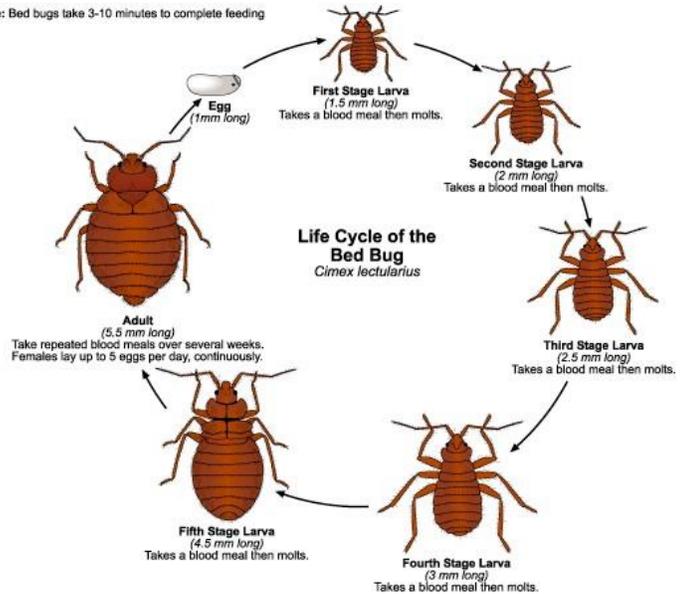


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Bedbug info sheet: preparation and treatment



Note: Bed bugs take 3-10 minutes to complete feeding



Treatment

Pre-treatment preparation

Proper preparation is absolutely mandatory for control to be effective. Any reputable pest control firm should outline this in detail and provide detailed instructions on what to do. This is generally done by the resident; Preparation involves providing access for pest control treatment as well as taking measures to ensure that bedbugs are destroyed or contained. If a home is not properly prepared, the likelihood of successful control drops significantly. Although preparation may be difficult for some people (seniors or handicapped individuals), it is essential for effective treatment, and thus in such cases professional services, family members, friends or social or charitable agencies may need to provide assistance. We have a list of reputable Bed bug preparation companies, should you have need of such services.

Here's a list of bed bugs' favorite hiding spots in the bedroom

TIP:

- Mattress (inside and out)-- **Mattress Covers can eliminate this hiding place**
- Pillows (inside and out) -- **Pillow Case Covers can eliminate this hiding place**
- Box spring -- **Box Spring covers can eliminate this hiding place**
- Creases and seams in bed linens- **These items should all be washed and dried**
- Bed frames and headboards- **These should be treated chemically by a professional**
- Bedroom clutter- **Items can be thoroughly inspected, vacuumed, and placed in a sealed plastic bag . Clutter is one of the top reasons for not getting rid of bed bugs for good. Clutter provides infinite hiding**

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places for bed bugs to hide and lay eggs. Do your best to eliminate clutter, if clutter persists, it may be next to impossible to get rid of your infestation.

- In & on edges of the carpeting- **These areas should be vacuumed & treated chemically by a professional**
- In cracks on the ceiling, wall and floors - **These areas should be treated chemically by a professional**
- In spaces between baseboards, floors & walls -**These areas should be treated chemically by a professional**
- Behind electrical outlet covers- **These areas should be treated chemically by a professional**
- Storage items in, around, & under bed.- **Items can be thoroughly inspected, vacuumed, & placed in a sealed bag . You should avoid storing things under the bed. Areas offer shield against chemical treatments while still close to you.**
- Nightstands and dressers- **These areas should be treated chemically by a professional**
- Anything hanging off the wall- **Should be inspected, vacuumed, and placed in a sealed bag.**

Packing

All furniture and appliances in the dwelling usually need to be pulled away from the baseboards, and it is commonly asked that all furniture containing potential hiding crevices, such as bookshelves and desks, be emptied and left open for the exterminator to spray. Items in tightly sealed containers are usually safe from bedbug infestation and need not be emptied.

Laundry

Everything that can be laundered *should* be laundered, and laundered in advance of the treatment, then placed in plastic bags. This would include stuffed animals, drapes and so on. The items should be securely tied into plastic bags, and emptied directly from the bags into the machines. (The bags should then be immediately disposed of.) It is heat, not water that kills any bedbugs residing within the laundered items; so the items should be washed in hot water, regardless of normal washing directions, and should be dried with medium heat (preferably high heat) for 20 minutes or more. (For those who have the ability to measure the temperature of the water in their washing machine, or of the hot air in their dryer, the target heat range is 120°F (49°C).) (If a marathon laundering session such as described is financially prohibitive, it has been posited by some that the items need only be run through the dryer, not the washing machine.

However, the extensive water and spinning action associated with washing machines may assist in dislodging bedbugs from where they are residing within clothes and laundered.) However, this is optional as the heat of the cycle of drying will effectively kill *all* stages—eggs, immature stage (nymphs) and adults. For items that require dry cleaning, the dry cleaners should be informed that the items in question are potentially infested, and the items should be bagged. (However, many dry cleaners then may refuse to accept the items.) Steam cleaning of carpets can be helpful; although bedbugs will not be in the middle of the floor, they may be under the carpets at the edges of rooms. Vacuuming is especially important, however. Pesticide is applied at perimeters and is effective, but the more steps are taken to assist removal, the more thorough the elimination will be.

Vacuuming

The mechanical removal of bedbugs by vacuuming is a most important part of preparing for control. Vacuuming alone will not solve the problem, but it can substantially reduce bedbugs' numbers and thus help reduce the population as part of preparing for treatment. A crevice attachment should be used on the seams of mattresses, on box springs, on bed legs, within furniture interiors, behind pictures, on curtains, and anywhere there is a possibility of the insects hiding (e.g. inside dresser drawers, dresser cases, under chairs, etc.). Carpets should also be vacuumed throughout the home, preferably with a power-head. Baseboards should also be vacuumed using the crevice tool—not swept—prior to the exterminator's arrival. Vacuum filters should then immediately be removed and either discarded outdoors (a good distance from the infested home) or incinerated.





Steam treatment

Some pest control firms do offer steam treatment for items like mattresses or upholstered furniture especially when individuals are concerned about pesticides on bedding. This has only a very limited effectiveness, however, it is quite effective in this range of less than 1/2 inch of penetration. This also depends on the time that the steam is applied to the surface of the item. Small steam cleaners for domestic use can be useful for mattresses and the surfaces of upholstered furniture. This is a worthwhile option if there are issues of allergy, and the homeowner takes the time to treat carefully in this limited context.

Managing bedding

There are differing opinions as to whether it is necessary to dispose of mattress, box springs, futons, pillows, and other bedding. There is of course often a heavy cost involved in the complete replacement of such bedding. It is clear, however, that getting rid of infested bedding does not solve the problem. The decision to replace bedding or not depends on the condition of and often related level of infestation within the items, the comfort level of the owner, whether the owner can afford replacement, and aesthetics. A reasonable rule of thumb is that new bedding does not need to be replaced but if bedding is older and replacement may have been done soon in any case, then of course, replacing it AFTER control is a welcome clean start. Treatment of bedding items must be done with care and according to the label on the insecticide used. Mattresses typically need local treatment with non-residual insecticides at seams and borders.

Box springs are more difficult to treat as there are more places for the insects to hide. The notion that getting rid of bedding helps solve the problem is misguided. Infestation must be handled first and then if new bedding is desired, the old bedding can be disposed of.

Spread of infestation in apartment buildings is *increased* by tenants deciding to throw away old bedding. An infested mattress or box spring dragged in a hallway to an elevator will cause bedbugs to fall off or even run off the item, and these may then find their way into other units. As noted here, the use of plastic bags to protect bedding after treatment or

to enclose bedbugs when the items are being thrown away are invaluable in preventing spread of infestation. It is also suggested to slash or mark-up infested items so that others do not take them back into the building.

After the mattress and/or box spring or futon has been treated, placing these inside a cotton, polyvinyl or polyethylene bag is a good idea as a secondary means of defense. Bedbugs like to hide near the victim and are commonly found on seams of mattresses, or within the structure of box springs. The mattress bag serves to reduce this likelihood and in mattresses, and box springs, it seals any remaining insects inside the bag. The mattress bag also protects the mattress from the mess of staining caused when bedbugs aggregate on seams. The bag is a good idea either until the infestation has been totally eliminated or in the case of good quality cotton bags, useful as a permanent protection for the mattress

—and also to enable easier control if infestation recurs.

Those who end up disposing of suspect items should enclose them in plastic mattress bags, or large garbage bags, to prevent shedding bugs and eggs on their way to the disposal site. Care should be taken to label throwaway items with a warning about the suspected bedbug infestation, or deface them, as furniture is often reclaimed by dumpster divers.



New items should not be purchased until after the infestation has been thoroughly eliminated. Also, many retailers offer disposal of old mattresses. This can pose obvious problems if new and old mattresses are carried together on the same truck without the proper precautions taken.

Do Not Change Where You Sleep or Temporarily Leave Your Home.

Some believe that they can avoid Bed Bugs by sleeping in a different area of their home. If you find out your bed is infested and you sleep in a different bedroom or the couch you may now find out you have a worse problem. Bed bugs over millions of years have become adept at locating hosts to feed on. If you move, the bed bugs will move with you, and you will potentially have a problem in two locations now. Even if you move out, you first of all risk bringing the bed bugs with you and infesting that area, second of all will still have a problem when you get home. Bed bugs can live up to 16 months, although the idea may sound terrible, it's best to continue sleeping in the infested areas until the bed bugs are gone. Mattress covers and aggressive mechanical and chemical methods can limit the bites dramatically so you don't have to serve as "bait".

Why bed bugs are so hard to control?

- Bed bugs are difficult to detect early in an infestation: You often may not realize that you have a bed bug problem, at least not until it has become widespread. People often mistake bites for mosquitos or fleas. Some people show absolutely no symptoms of the bites. Bed bugs whole evolutionary process has allowed them to be incredibly good at hiding.
- Bed bugs may move to other areas and also re infest treated rooms: They can re infest treated rooms by hitchhiking back on clothing, bags, etc. Also they can migrate between rooms and apartments through pipe and wiring runs and through wall and ceiling voids.
- Bed bug eggs are extremely difficult to find, remove or kill: Most conventional pesticides have show to have zero effect on eggs. (Bedlam is the one product that seems to kill a good number of eggs, but not all). Adult female bed bugs lay eggs every day in large clusters and in multiple hiding spaces, sometimes far from the bed. Examples include: Luggage, televisions, in closets, under rugs, in electrical outlets, and hundreds of other potential locations. This is one of the top reasons getting rid of bed bugs is so difficult.
- Bed bugs can go for over 16 months with out feeding if they've fed recently.
- Insecticide treatments often give disappointing results: The chemicals today are far less powerful and far less varied then the pesticides used in the past. What we have is the strongest on the market, but bed bugs have shown some affinity to resisting these chemicals.

Treatment

You should always try a professional when treating chemically for bed bugs, Most infestations are not successfully handled by one treatment alone. Most require exterminators to visit multiple times. In multi-unit dwellings, such as apartment buildings, the whole building should be treated, in order to avoid a situation where bed bugs travel out of the treated unit, only to infest other apartments and/or repeatedly reinfest the original unit.

Post-treatment actions to be performed by the resident

The follow-up service will occur approximately 10-12 days after the initial treatment. To reduce the amount of work to be completed by the homeowner in preparation of this follow-up service we advise you not to completely reassemble your home until this service has been performed. These accompanying measures should be taken during the period between the initial and follow-up services:

Do not tamper with any of the devices left in place. Mattress and box spring encasements are available for purchase through your service technician and should be installed during or soon after the initial service. These





will protect the mattresses and box springs from becoming re-infested and will prevent bedbugs potentially already within these objects from re-infesting the home.

Where possible, clothing should remain in sealed plastic bags to prevent potential re-infestation. Bags must be kept sealed at all times. Where the homeowner wishes to place clothing back into dressers and closets these items will need to be removed, bagged and re-laundered prior to the follow-up service.

Please leave all other objects in their original state of preparation until the follow-up service has been completed, i.e. electrical outlet covers removed, pictures off of the walls, etc.

Do not introduce any new or used furniture or any other potentially infested items not previously in unit

Future prevention against bedbugs for homeowners

When traveling both outside of and within the country be sure to inspect hotel rooms to ensure they are free of bedbugs. Inspect the bed, box spring and mattress, paying close attention to the mattress piping, plastic protective caps for the box spring, and the headboard. When returning home bag and launder all clothing and be sure to inspect suitcases for bedbugs – this stage is preferably done outside or in a garage.

Do not buy used furniture, electronics or beds unless you can verify their origin and are confident they are free of potential bedbug presence.

Periodically perform an inspection of your home focusing on the sleeping quarters and inspecting the bed and furniture in close proximity to the bed. Never open the box spring or mattress encasement covers. Bed bugs hide in cracks and crevices and prefer wood and fabric surfaces so they will be found in these areas most often.

Bedbugs are highly mobile but typically remain close to the host. They are generally only active at night to avoid detection however can be found when inspecting areas where they like to hide.

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