

## **What is a bed bug?**



Picture of a bedbug

A bed bug is a small nocturnal insect of the family Cimicidae that lives by hematophagy (or in other words by feeding on the blood of humans and other warm-blooded hosts). Bed Bugs can be found all over the world, generally in human inhabited environments. The reason bed bugs are normally found in these areas is because they feed off the blood of humans.

Bed Bugs are fairly small; an adult may grow to be the size of 4-7mm. They are a reddish-brown color and their shape is flat and oval.

Although misconceptions have led people to believe that they are not visible to the eye, they are in fact visible and easy to spot because of their slow movements.

## **Where do Bed Bugs come from?**

Bed Bugs can come from a variety of places. But typically one of the most common forms of infestation is through contacts with infested furniture in hotels, motels, and other places of temporary accommodation. Bed Bugs can be passed on from used clothing or furniture. Cleanliness does not arrest the spread of infestation directly. The idea that dirt causes Bed Bugs infestations is a misconception. However cleanliness, by depriving the bed bugs some of their hiding places, does slow down the infestation. Apartment complexes often have Bed Bugs because they can get from apartment to apartment easily.

## **What are the feeding habits of Bed Bugs?**

As previously mentioned Bed Bugs feed on the blood of humans. When a bed bug bites a human it injects two hollow tubes into the skin. With one tube the bed bug injects a anti-coagulant, anesthetic and with the other tube it steals your blood. Generally a bed bug will feed for about five minutes before returning to its hiding place.

Also, Bed Bugs typically are active only at night (they start appearing at dusk) because they are nocturnal, but can be seen anytime especially if a chance to feed occurs. An important bit of information to know about the feeding habits of Bed Bugs is that they can survive for up to eighteen months without feeding even though they seek blood every five to ten days. A hungry bed bug looks slightly different from one that's just been fed. A hungry bed bug typically flat with a circular shaped abdomen while a blood fed bed bug is elongated with a tapered abdomen.

### **Are bed bug bites dangerous?**

**In April 2013 Medical News today identified Bedbugs as carriers of MRSA a highly dangerous disease killing over 40,000 people yearly in the UNITED STATES alone!!**

Typically one can't feel a bed bug bite until minutes or hours later. The bite may look like a flat welt or a raised, red bump and are often times very itchy. Luckily their bites aren't dangerous but rather annoying. They can cause skin irritation or rashes if bit frequently so it's a wise idea to get rid of them as soon as possible. If you end up itching or your skin gets irritated you may be allergic to bed bug bites due to the chemical they release when they bite you. However, doctors often misdiagnosis bed bug bites due to the fact they look like other skin conditions. The bites may take anywhere from a few days to a few weeks to go away on their own.

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### **How do I stop the itching from bed bug bites?**

One that will help out is anti-itching cream for insect bites. You can usually find these at a drug store over-the-counter. Other people say that taking Benadryl or using calamine lotion will help with it. It's important to remember that even though these methods may help reduce itchiness they will not get rid of the Bed Bugs, so it's important that you seek help to get rid of the Bed Bugs or they will still find and bite you. Our Bed Bug Treatment section has a list of all treatments that worked for our visitors.

## **How can I tell if I have Bed Bugs?**

Check out our [Bed Bug Checklist](#) for a comprehensive list of ways in which you can check for bedbugs – generally, the first thing you may notice is a peculiar pungent odor, this odor is often times very familiar to building inspectors and tenement dwellers. If you think you may have Bed Bugs it's a good idea to visually check your bed, as Bed Bugs can often be spotted. Other things you may notice are blood spots, fecal stains or cast exoskeleton skins. Take extra care in checking the mattress itself and the corners of bed nets. Bed Bugs typically will hide in old furniture, behind peeling paint, wooden floorboards as well as seams and folds in a mattress, bed frames and bed springs. Remember, just because they are called Bed Bugs doesn't mean they are only in your bed. Although in most cases Bed Bugs are in a small, concentrated area and usually within 10-20 feet of where you sleep. Make sure to look at our Bed Bug Checklist for more information on this!

## **What do I need to know if I have Bed Bugs?**

If you think you may have Bed Bugs don't bring anything else into the contaminated room because it may become contaminated. Also remember not to start sleeping in a different bed, the sofa or with another family member or friend because there is a chance that the Bed Bugs may follow you to the new location and therefore contaminate another area. Don't throw anything out, try to get rid of the Bed Bugs yourself or try and treat yourself, wait and seek help from a professional. Make sure you don't bag anything unless it has been washed in hot water and dried on hot for one to two hours. Remember, if you bag up clothing or bedding that has not been washed and they contain Bed Bugs when you open the bag the Bed Bugs may contaminate your living space again as they can live up to 18 months without feeding. To be safe just assume everything in that room is infested; also, make sure to review our bed bug treatment section.

## **How do you get rid of Bed Bugs?**

Check out our [Bed Bug Treatment](#) section for exact details and methods – it's a good idea to get rid of Bed Bugs as soon as possible because each individual bed bug can lay four to five eggs a

day, so if you do the math that's a lot of Bed Bugs you don't want around (Consider this: in a room that is around 70 degrees and there are 40 bugs six months later there would be 5,905 bugs!). Consider the help of a pest control company as they have much experience in dealing with Bed Bugs. If you decide to go that route save any Bed Bugs you may find to show pest control so they can help you identify the specimen; again, check out our bed bug treatment section to find out what else you can do.

### **Do Bed Bugs ever bite private parts?**

They sure do – they don't care what part of the body they feed on, but they don't like hair and will move to the area that is free from hair.

### **Do Mattress covers work?**

Mattress covers will seal the mattress and keep bedbugs that are in, locked in (and those 'trapped' bugs will eventually die) and will also keep bed bugs out. The bed bugs hiding around the bed frame and other areas will still find their way to the top of the mattress and bite you. Don't be fooled that this is a cure all, which it is not, a mattress cover simply protects the mattress (not you).

If you are looking for a mattress cover, you don't have to spend a lot if you know what to look for! Check out my post on [mattress cover for bed bugs](#).

### **Do Bed Bugs smell?**

Most people say that bed bugs smell like raspberries and in cases where the place is infested, it can smell like moldy shoes.

### **I've heard that bedbugs rest on the ceiling and fly to their target, is this true?**

Not true, BUT, Bat Bugs which are exactly like bed bugs except for the hair on their head, feed on bats. If the infested bats residing in your home are removed, these bugs may move down and start feeding on you.

**If I have a pet in the room with me, will the bed bugs feed on it instead of me?**

No, you are the Filet Mignon and your pet is ground beef. Humans are the preferred host for feeding!

**Is it true that a bite from a bed bug can take up to 14 days to show?**

From what the California Department of Public Health Vector-Borne Disease Section says, a bed bug bite may not show for up to 14 days!

Everyone reacts differently to bed bug bites, but if a reaction does occur, it usually happens by late morning.

**Can I take legal action against the hotel for being bitten by bed bugs?**

Yes, there are a number of examples, but three of the most popular include a woman who filed a lawsuit against Catskills resort for \$27 million; bitten so bad that she can no longer stay in hotels. Because this is a critical part of how she makes her living (she's in entertainment booking), she can no longer continue her lifestyle.

The second involves a woman staying at the Hilton hotel in Ohio; Sai Kim filed a lawsuit for more than \$5 million claiming that she ended up with a 150 bedbug bites on her hands, feet, face, fingers, toes, legs, neck, back, chest, stomach and genitals, see picture below.



Bed Bug Bites on Sai Kim who filed a 5 million dollar lawsuit

The claim reads like this: "As a direct result of exposure to bed bugs, she was left physically scarred and emotionally damaged and that these consequences were a direct result of the defendant's negligence and that the hotel breached its duty to provide reasonably safe accommodations that eventually led to "embarrassing injury and tremendous emotional distress". The first claim was also similar to that above.

The last case and probably the biggest bedbug case ever settled out of court, was a woman who was bitten more than 400 times while staying at a Ramada Plaza Hotel in San Francisco. It's reported that she received \$71,000 to settle her bed bug claim. Note: The reports on the net claim information about the lawsuit came from the City Star, a local paper, but in trying to find the actual case, no information was available.

### **What is the size of a Bed Bug?**

The picture below shows the size of a bed bug compared to a

