

BEDBUGS : HISTORY

This insect has a famous history as a bloodsucker and is named "bedbug" because it feeds on a bed's occupants at night. Bedbugs primarily attack humans but can feed on any warm blooded animal such as birds, mice, and pets. The bedbug is found worldwide and probably came to the US from Europe in the 17th century. Some people think bedbugs are a sign of unsanitary conditions in a home or hotel/motel, but this is no longer true.

Bedbugs can turn up anywhere!

IDENTIFICATION

An adult is just under a 1/4" long and looks flat. It is as wide as long, and oval in shape compared to most other insects. It can range in size from a poppy seed to a tick, depending on the life cycle stage. The color of the bedbug is brown to reddish brown.



Mature Bed Bug : *Cimex lectularius*

Travelers can protect themselves by doing the following:

- Check around headboards, mattresses and box springs for bed bugs and the dark fecal spots they leave behind.
- In heavy infestations, there may be an odor often described as smelling like coconut, raspberry or sweaty socks.
- Avoid keeping briefcases or luggage on the bed or on the floor next to the bed.
- Hang all clothes. Leave nothing lying on bedding or furniture.
- Store suitcases off the floor and on the opposite side of the room from beds.
- If you detect bedbugs, inform the front desk and request another room, preferably at least 100 ft away. Be wary about being moved to an adjacent room.
- When returning home, leave luggage in the garage or basement until you are able to thoroughly inspect it for bed bugs.

For more information:

Louisville Metro Health Department
Division of Environmental Health
and Protection
502-574-6650
<http://www.louisvilleky.gov/health>

*"Nite, Nite...
sleep tight and
don't let the
bedbugs bite !"*



Information you
need about ...
Bedbug
Infestations



www.louisvilleky.gov/health

REPRODUCTION

Female bedbugs can lay up to 5 eggs a day and over 500 eggs during its lifetime. The egg is tiny, whitish, and hard to see without magnification (individual eggs are about the size of a dust spec). Each bedbug will molt or shed its shell five times. As it grows, a blood meal is required for each molt. If a bedbug is not able to find an immediate blood meal, it can slow down its life process and often live up to a full year before obtaining its next blood meal.

BITING

Bedbugs usually bite people at night, while sleeping. People react differently to bed bug bites. Usually the bite is painless, but may cause a small, hard white welt or swelling. Swelling may include redness in some sensitive people. You may have severe itching at the site of the bite that lasts for several hours or days. Scratching may cause the welts to become infected. A common concern with bedbugs is whether they can transmit disease to humans. Bedbugs can harbor pathogens in their bodies, but transmission of disease to humans is highly unlikely.

HABITS

Bedbugs hide during the day in dark, protected sites. They prefer fabric, wood, and paper surfaces. The most common place to find bedbugs are tufts, seams, and folds of mattresses. You can also find bedbugs in the crevices of the box spring, bed frame and the headboard. In heavy infestations, the bedbugs may crawl several feet away from their host and hide in furniture, electrical boxes, window and door frames, floor cracks, baseboard, and under tack board of wall-to-wall carpeting. Bedbugs often crawl upward to hide in pictures, wall hangings, drapery pleats, behind loose wallpaper, ceiling molding and cracks in plaster.

SIGNS of Bedbug Infestations

- Live bedbugs
- The appearance of small brownish or reddish dots on bed linens which are blood spots or fecal droppings.
- Eggs, egg shells and molted skins
- An odor described as smelling like coconut, raspberries or sweaty socks
- Bedbug bites on you !

GETTING RID of BEDBUGS

An inspection of your home by a licensed pest control professional to locate bed bugs and the places where they hide is the first step. The pest control professional will determine what clean up efforts will be needed and the proper insecticide required to get rid of the infestation and will most likely return for a follow up inspection.

PREVENTION

- Do not bring home mattresses, box springs or furniture such as chairs and couches that have been left at the curb or beside a dumpster.
- Do not buy used furniture, or at least do not bring used bedding and upholstered furniture into your home until all items have been inspected for bed bugs.
- Carefully inspect clothing and baggage for bed bugs after staying at hotels, motels or other locations where you might sleep over.
- In your home, clean and repair cracked walls or open areas to eliminate the harborage sites for bed bugs.
- Every few months, inspect your bedding, bedroom furniture and other places in your home where bed bugs hide.