

BED BUGS – Fact Sheet

Where Bed Bugs Are Found

Bed bugs are found most often in temporary housing, such as hotels, motels, dorms, shelters, and apartments. Lately, bed bugs are also being found in single-family homes and nursing homes. Infestations like these are not always because of poor housekeeping or hygiene, and can include expensive hotels and homes.

Bed Bugs and People

Bed bugs feed on people. Like mosquitoes, they bite people and drink a blood meal. Unlike mosquitoes, they are not known to transmit any human diseases. However, the bites can itch intensely and resulting scratching can result in skin infections.

Know the Signs

You can recognize bed bugs by blood stains from crushed bugs or by rusty (sometimes dark) spots fecal on sheets, mattresses, bed clothes, and walls. Fecal spots, eggshells, and shed skins can be found around their hiding places. There is an offensive, sweet, musty odor when bed bug infestations are severe.

Preventing Bed Bugs

- Keep all beds pulled slightly away from walls, furniture, and curtains.
- Keep the floor under and around beds free of clutter.
- Change sheets and pillow cases weekly (wash in either hot water or machine dried at medium or higher heat)
- The mattress sheet should be form fitting (with elastic or tucked under the mattress.)
- Use light colored sheets and check for discolored spots when removing them from the bed.
- Look for signs of bedbugs along the seams of the mattress in places where you are staying (hotel, motels) and keep your bags and luggage off the floor and bed.
- Do not place anything (luggage, blankets, pillows, stuffed toys) which may have bedbugs onto any bed. Be particularly careful when returning from a trip.
- Only sleep on beds. Do not sleep on couches or in upholstered chairs.
- Inspect all used furniture carefully for bedbugs before bringing it into a home.

Columbus Health Code

In housing with two or more dwelling (family) units, the owner (landlord) must get rid of any insects, including bedbugs. Every tenant (occupant) must keep their apartment clean and sanitary.

These requirements are specified in the Columbus City Code (chapters 705 & 713) which are enforced by the Department of Development. Complaints can be made by calling 311 (645-3111). Successfully getting rid of bedbugs, ants, roaches, and fleas, requires cooperation between landlords and tenants.

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Getting Rid of Bed Bug

If you see bedbugs or other signs that you may have them, you do NOT need to throw away furniture or bedding. Although bed bugs are difficult to eliminate, you can succeed by following these steps:

1. Remove the pillows, sheets, blankets, mattress, and box springs from the bed frame of the infested bed.
2. Wash sheets, blankets as you normally would. Dry at medium or high heat.
3. Clean the bed frame completely and treat the bed frame with a residual insecticide. Residual means that the insecticide will keep killing after it is applied. Very few insecticides today are specifically labeled to control bed bugs. Use an insecticide which has on its label that it is for INDOOR use to kill COCKROACHES and will keep killing for WEEKS or MONTHS. One gallon ready to use containers of such insecticides with sprayers are readily available at reasonable cost at local stores. Do not apply any insecticide to the box springs, mattress, sheets, blankets, pillow cases, or pillows unless the label specifically permits such an application.
4. Put a small amount of grease (Vaseline, etc.) all the way around each of the bed legs just above the floor. Alternatively use double sided tape. (You may wish to put a piece of cardboard under each bed leg to prevent the grease from getting onto the floor.)
5. Vacuum and clean the box springs and mattress. The contents of the vacuum should be thrown out in a tied shut plastic trash bag. Encase the box springs and mattress in plastic zippered mattress covers. Put the box springs and mattress back on the bed frame.
6. Tumble all pillows in a dryer for at least 20 minutes at medium or higher heat. The pillows must be hot to the touch when removed from the dryer.
7. Make the bed with the freshly washed sheets, pillow cases, and blankets.
8. Apply the residual insecticide to potential bedbug hiding places in the bedrooms. Hiding places include cracks and crevices along the base of walls.
9. Every week, re-apply the residual insecticide to the bed frame legs, vacuum, and replace all sheets, blankets, and pillow cases.
10. Replace the sheets, blankets, and pillow cases more often if bed bugs are found or any bedding has hung to the floor overnight.
11. Remember that bedbugs are killed if subjected to temperatures under 10 degrees and over 120 degrees for several hours. Bed bugs are killed in minutes by temperatures over 140 degrees.
12. Bed bugs can live for months without feeding. All these control measures must be continued for at least three months beyond the last observed bed bug or bite. The plastic on the box springs and mattress must not be removed for at least 6 months.