

# How Do Know You Have BED BUGS?



These bed bugs are hiding in a crevice of a wooden nightstand.

- Multiple red, itchy bite marks appear on the body upon waking up
- Tiny blood stains or smears appear on bedding/sheets
- Bed bugs are seen clinging to furniture, mattresses, or any other hiding spot
- Large amount of reddish-black fecal material is found anywhere bed bugs live
- The infested room has a sweet, musty odor that cannot be explained]

Right: Bed bugs and their fecal matter shown on the baseboard of a wall.



Photo courtesy of M.F. Potter, Univ. of Kentucky



Photo courtesy of M.F. Potter, Univ. of Kentucky

Above: Bed bugs hiding in a mattress seam.

# FACT OR FICTION?

## FACT:

**Bed bugs are on the rise!** They can be found any time, anywhere, and when you least expect them. Bed bug infestations are occurring all around the United States.

## FACT:

**Bed bugs do not carry disease.** To date, there has been no evidence that bed bugs carry disease pathogens or are able to transmit blood-related disorders.

## FACT:

**Bed bugs are nocturnal,** meaning they are active (and bite) only at night. Bed bugs hide during daylight hours and shy away from direct sunlight.

## Myth:

**Bed bugs chew their way into your mattress or bore their way into your furniture.** Bed bugs cannot chew at all. They have mouthparts similar to a mosquito. Therefore, they will only be found on the outside of your mattress, provided there are no holes already there. They also can crawl in between furniture seams, where two pieces are nailed together. Bed bugs do not create new holes in furniture.

## Myth:

**Bed bugs are associated with filth.** It does not matter to a bed bug how clean the house or building is. They are blood-sucking insects and are not attracted to filth or food products.



# Where Can I Learn More About BED BUGS?

If you are having a problem with bed bugs in your home or business establishment, you should contact a qualified pest management company.

**For more information about bed bugs, contact:**

## FAIRFAX COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Division of Environmental Health  
Community Health and Safety Section

10777 Main Street • Fairfax, VA 22030

703-246-2300 • TTY 703-591-6435

[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/eh](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/eh)

This document can be made available in an alternative format upon request. Please call 703-246-2300, TTY 703-591-6435. Allow seven working days for preparation of the material.



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# How to Identify and Control BED BUGS



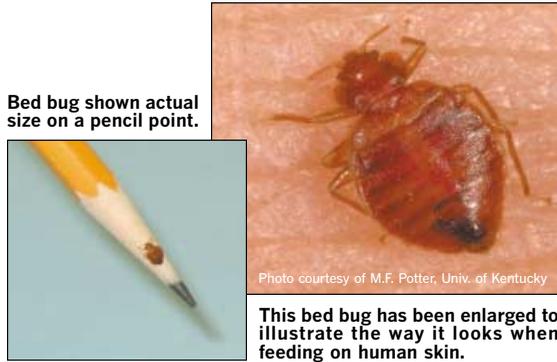
## FAIRFAX COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT



Division of Environmental Health  
Community Health and Safety Section

# What are **BED BUGS?**

Bed bugs are flat, wingless, bloodsucking insects that measure about 1/8 - 1/4 inch long. They range in color from light brown to reddish-brown. A bed bug can lay up to 540 eggs in a lifetime, and the brood is then able to reproduce in only 21 days. Bed bugs are a nuisance pest only, and are not known to spread disease.



## Where Do **BED BUGS** Come From?

Bed bugs can be found throughout the world. During the latter part of the 20th century, bed bugs were relatively scarce. However, in recent years, with increased domestic and international travel, bed bug activity has made a resurgence in the United States.

Bed bugs may crawl into or attach themselves to clothing, luggage, furniture, or any other item a person has in an infested area. Wherever this newly infested item is moved, bed bugs can make a new home and stay.

## How Do I Control **BED BUGS?**

***If you have bed bugs, do not panic. Bed bugs can be contained and eliminated from your home or business establishment with the proper course of action.***

### WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

Because bed bugs do not move long distances by themselves, a population can be contained if they are not moved by other means. Do not move new items into an infested room or take items out of this room. If items must be removed from the infested room, they should be first placed in trash bags that are tied securely before removal. Once removed, fabric items in the bag should be washed immediately.

If the items are to be discarded, trash bags should be placed in a closed container not located next to the house or building.

### WASH FABRIC ITEMS

Fabric items that need to be laundered include clothing, sleepwear, pet bedding, mattress covers, pillowcases and covers, cushions and covers, curtains, dust ruffles, throw rugs, tablecloths, towels and other linens.

Items should be washed with a strong detergent in the hottest temperature setting possible and then stored away from the infested room until the bed bugs are eliminated.

### MOVE PICTURES & FURNISHINGS

Items such as pictures and decorations should be taken off the walls, and all furnishings should be moved to the center of the room. This reduces many potential hiding areas and maximizes the distance between the furniture and the walls. This distance helps reduce bed bug mobility to new locations in a home or building.

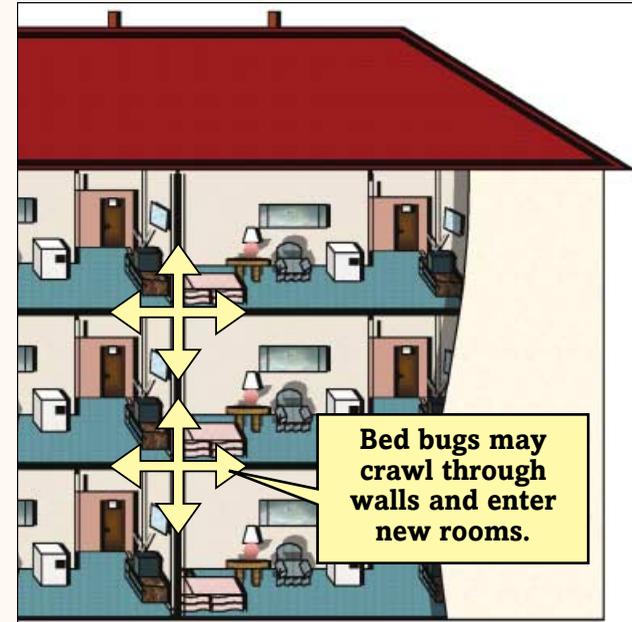
If bed bugs do not crawl inside the walls, they are more quickly controlled.

### DISCARD OR COVER MATTRESSES

Old mattresses with holes in them should be thrown away. If mattresses are new or in a good condition, they can be vacuumed, placed in direct sunlight for a few hours on a warm day, and then placed inside a zippered plastic mattress cover. Tape should then be placed over the zipper, so that bed bugs cannot crawl out.

### PEST CONTROL

Hiring a pest management company is recommended. Pest management professionals can locate all bed bug hiding areas and apply a treatment that will effectively eliminate the population.



**Bed Bugs are "lazy" insects. They do not run, travel long distances, explore, or fly. In fact, they may stay in the same location without food for up to one year!**

## Where Do **BED BUGS** Hide?

**FLOORING:** Inside floor cracks, under carpets, or under baseboards.

**WALLS:** Behind loose wallpaper, in plaster cracks, inside mounted light fixtures, and in or under pictures/posters/shelves or other hung items.

**WALL VOIDS** (*the area between the walls*): Behind electric sockets and light switch coverings; behind phone and cable jacks; inside service panels and wall installations for electrical, plumbing and ventilation.

**BEDS:** In tufts, seams and mattress folds; inside box springs; between bed covers, linens, pillowcases and pillowcase covers; in bed frame seams; underneath bed frame legs; behind headboards; and in pet bedding.

**OTHER FURNITURE:** In seams of furniture; underneath furniture legs; under drawer linings and in drawer tracts; behind furniture backs; underneath cushions and cushion covers; inside upholstery where it is stapled to the frame.

**CLOTHING:** Attached to linings and folds of clothing in hampers, closets, drawers and other laundry areas.

**OTHER:** In or under home furnishings (radios, clocks, lamps, phones, etc.), personal electronics (computers, stereos, TVs, etc.) and any other item that provides a dark, undisturbed hiding spot.