

Bed bugs

What are bed bugs?

Bed bugs (*Cimex lectularius*) are small, flat, insects. They are reddish-brown, wingless, and slightly larger than the head of a pin. Bed bugs feed only on the blood of people and animals while they sleep.

Where are bed bugs found?

Bed bugs are usually found near areas where people sleep. During the day, bed bugs hide in mattress seams, box springs, bed frames, and within 8 feet of where people sleep.

Do bed bugs cause health problems for people?

Bed bugs do not spread disease. But because their bites cause itching, people bitten by bed bugs can get skin infections. People allergic to bed bug bites may need medical help.

What are the signs and symptoms of bed bugs?

Tell-tale bite marks on the face, neck, arms, hands, or other body parts while sleeping are signs that there are bed bugs in the area. Bed bug bites look like mosquito or flea bites.

But *before* you see bites, you may notice:

- Bed bugs' outer shells after they molt
- Bed bugs in sheets and mattress folds
- Rust-colored blood spots on the mattress or nearby furniture from the blood-filled body waste the bugs excrete
- Sweet, musty odor

Bed bugs inject a blood thinner (anticoagulant) and numb the area they bite. This prevents you from feeling their bites.

How did I get bed bugs?

Bed bugs can live a long time without feeding. They are experts at hiding. Bed bugs can move from place to place through luggage, clothes, bedding, and furniture.

Who is at risk of getting bed bugs?

People who travel often, or who sleep where people have previously slept, have a higher risk for getting bed bug bites. They can also spread bed bugs.

How are bed bugs treated?

Pest management uses many ways to treat bed bugs. Pesticides, cold, and/or heat treatment are common ways to get rid of them. Pest management will treat infested patient rooms and/or campus lodging rooms.

What do I need to do?

Any items that cannot be washed or heat-treated must stay in the room until pest management says they are free of bed bugs. This can take up to 72 hours.

Clothing

- Place all clothing in a plastic bag and tie the bag tightly.
- Take your bag(s) to the laundry room on the unit and empty the contents directly into the washer or dryer. Wash or dry on hottest setting for 20 minutes.

Personal items

Your personal items (such as your purse, wallet, cell phone, laptop, luggage) must be visually inspected and/or heat treated.

- Items that cannot be heat treated (such as electronics, cosmetics) require visual inspection to make sure they are free of bed bugs.
- Heat treating personal items will take about 20 minutes. Your nurse will let you know when the treatment is complete.

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National Institutes of Health Clinical Center
Bethesda, MD 20892
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