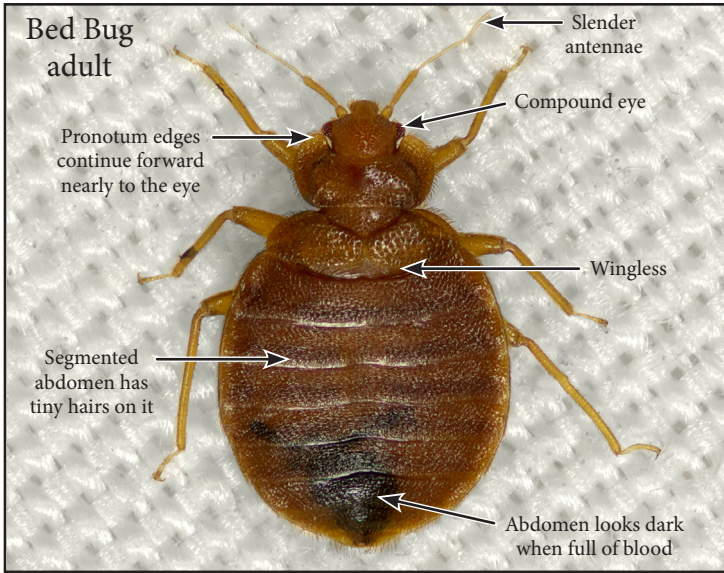


Bed Bugs

- Status
- Blood feeder
 - Possible health threat

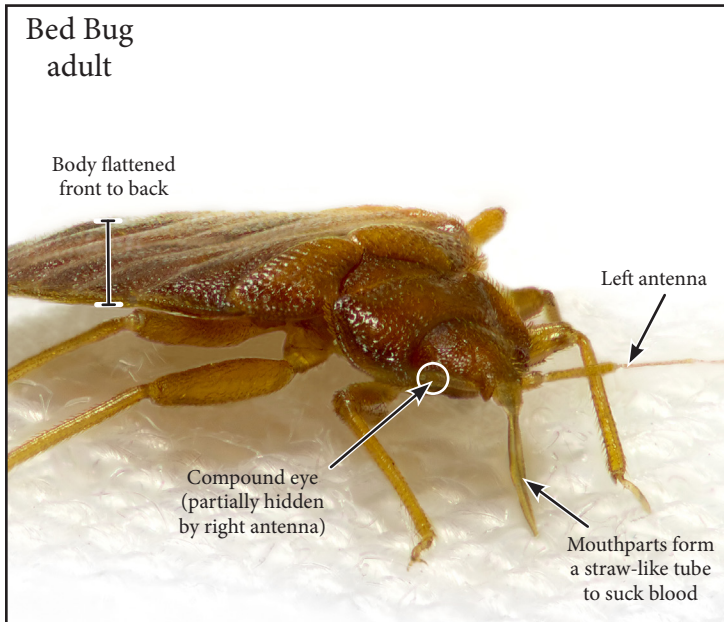
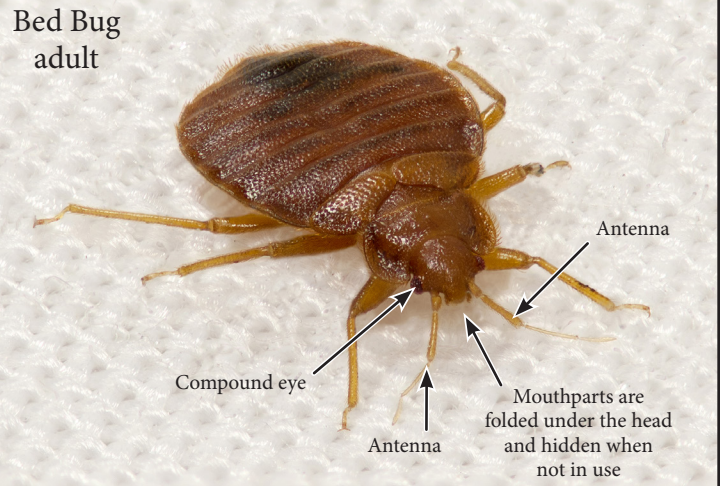


General Information

Bed bugs are widespread and have been found in houses, apartments, hotels, schools, hospitals, dormitories, and movie theaters. They use their straw-like mouthparts to suck blood from warm-blooded animals such as humans, bats, and birds. Adults are oval-shaped, flattened front-to-back, and wingless. At maturity, they are 4–5 mm long and 1.5–3 mm wide. They are light brown when hungry but after feeding on blood, their abdomen looks bright red, red-brown, or blackish. Bed bugs may be mistaken for small cockroaches but unlike cockroaches, which scavenge human food, bed bugs feed only on blood. They remain hidden during the day and actively feed at night. Their bites are painless but the bite wounds can be extremely itchy for days later. If disturbed, alarmed, or crushed, they release an unpleasant musky odor. When they defecate, they leave dark stains (fecal spots), often on sheets and bedding.

Life Cycle

Bed bugs have three stages in their life cycle: egg, nymph, and adult. Adult females lay eggs on rough dry surfaces near their hiding places, either singly or in small clusters. One to four weeks later, the nymphs hatch from the eggs and seek a host animal from which to feed. As nymphs eat and mature, they outgrow their skin, grow a new skin layer beneath it, and shed the old one, a process called molting. Following each molt, the nymph is a little larger. After the fifth growth-molt cycle, usually 4-6 weeks later, the bed bug reaches full size and is an adult. The process of changing body forms while maturing is called metamorphosis.



Bed Bug Bites

At night, bed bugs travel from their hiding places to feed on sleeping host animals. They insert their long needle-like mouthparts into the skin, inject saliva which digests blood cells, and drink up the digested blood. As the abdomen fills with blood, it turns bright red, dark red-brown, or blackish. After feeding, they retreat to their hiding places. They typically feed every 5-10 days but can live for up to 8 months without feeding.

Unlike many insects that feed on human blood, bed bugs are not known to transmit (vector) any disease-causing bacteria or viruses (pathogens). Reactions to bed bug bites vary among individuals. Many victims show no signs of bites. Others don't realize they've been bitten until rash, redness, or swelling appears around the bite, sometimes with intense itching.



Detection

Bed bugs are active at night and are adept at hiding in dark places during the day. They most often hide in crevices and in spaces between mattresses and box springs, on bed frames and headboards, and between couch and chair cushions. They are less commonly found in dressers and nightstands, in and on luggage, in electrical outlets, and among clutter. Once they infest a room, they often travel to adjacent rooms.

People with a sensitive sense of smell can detect the unpleasant musky odor released into a room by bed bugs. In addition to bite symptoms, other signs of their presence include fecal spots, blood smears on sheets, and molted skins.

Prevention and Control

Proper sanitation practices and diligence can help prevent bed bug infestation.

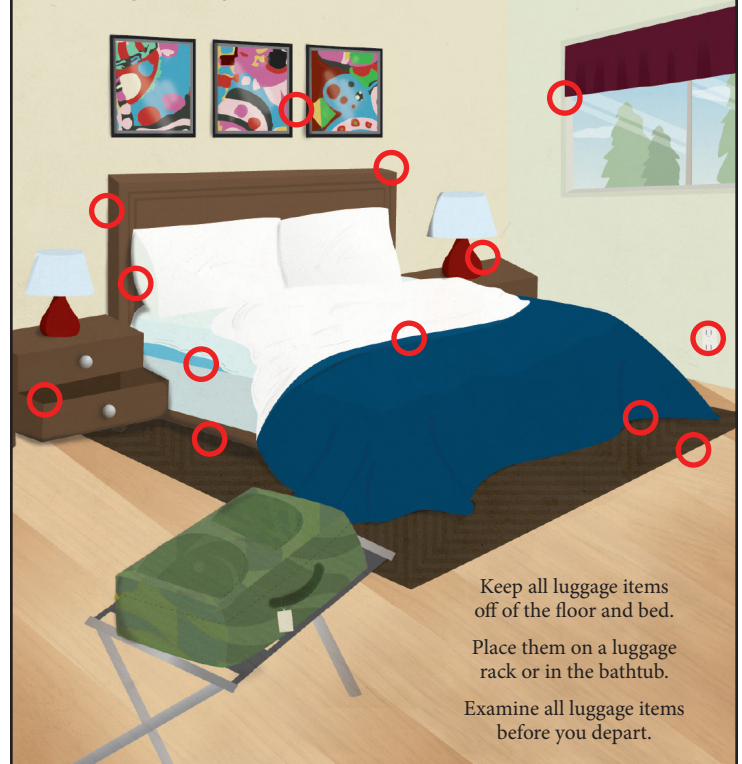
- Inspect for bed bugs wherever you sit or stay. Eggs are tiny white ovals, bed bugs are brownish, shed skins are yellowish, and fecal spots are black.
- If you may have been exposed to bed bugs, wash and dry your clothes on high heat, then run them through the dryer again for at least 20 minutes. Dry clean items that cannot be machine-dried. Place shoes and other non-washable items into sealable plastic bags and place them in the freezer overnight to kill bed bugs that might be on or in them.
- Never bring used or discarded furniture or clothing into your home unless it has been carefully inspected for bed bugs. Wash and/or freeze clothing and other items as described above.
- If you find bed bugs at home, do not try to control them yourself; no over-the-counter product is effective at eliminating the infestation. Bed bug control should be handled by a licensed professional pest control company that is experienced in bed bug management.



Cast skins of bed bugs, which are shed as they grow.

Note the dark dried blood.

Bed Bug hiding places



Keep all luggage items off of the floor and bed.

Place them on a luggage rack or in the bathtub.

Examine all luggage items before you depart.

Tips for Traveling

- Pack clean clothing and toiletries in sealable plastic bags, then into your luggage. Take additional sealable plastic bags for dirty clothes.
- Before staying or sleeping in a new place, inspect the room and bedding for infestation. Turn back all bedding and lift the mattress corners in order to look for bed bugs and their fecal spots.
- If you find signs of bed bugs, tell the management and request another room; an even better choice is to leave that hotel. Do not let them offer to “spot treat” the infested room for you; the infested room must be treated over time by a pest control company and cannot be occupied that day.
- Keep all luggage items off of the floor and bed; place them on a luggage rack or in the bathtub.
- Don’t unpack; keep your belongings in your suitcase.
- Place dirty clothes in sealed plastic bags for later washing.
- Before you pack to leave the hotel, inspect your luggage for bed bugs.
- When you return home, place your luggage in the garage or outdoors, not in your home.
- Remove items individually and inspect them for bed bugs. As clothes and other items are removed from plastic bags, immediately wash them as described above.
- Once luggage items are emptied, vacuum them, and place them in sealable plastic bags; store them in the garage if possible.