

# What are bed bugs?

Bed bugs are about 1/4 inch long, with reddish-brown, oval, flattened bodies. They are easily mistaken for ticks or roaches. They feed mostly at night on the blood of people and animals.

Bed bugs may be found in homes, apartments, hotels, motels, dorm rooms and modes of transportation.

Changes in modern pest control and the use of less effective chemicals are reasons for the increase of bed bugs.

# Do bed bugs cause health problems?

- Bed bug bites may cause a skin rash in some cases
- Having bed bugs in your home may cause stress and embarrassment
- Bed bugs can cause discomfort



*This photo is an adult bed bug feeding on a person's skin. Their bites may leave marks on some people while others may not see any marks.*

# Where do bed bugs live?

They can be found almost anywhere in your house or other buildings. They are found in fabric and wood not metal and plastic. Places to look include:

- In mattresses and box springs (especially in the seams or creases)
- In bed frames and headboards
- Along and under the edge of carpet (behind beds and furniture)
- In hardwood floors (check corners or cracks)
- In moulding and baseboard cracks
- Behind picture frames and wall hangings
- In switch plates and outlets
- Under loose wallpaper and paneling
- In clothing stored in closets and drawers
- Inside clocks, phones, TVs and smoke detectors
- In cloth chairs and sofas (check seams, skirts, and under cushions)

Compiled by:



## Lexington-Fayette County Health Department

333 Waller Avenue, 4th Floor

Lexington, KY 40504

(859) 231-9791

Fax: (859) 231-9459

[www.lexingtonhealthdepartment.org](http://www.lexingtonhealthdepartment.org)

01/07



# Bed Bugs

## How to prevent and get rid of bed bugs



Cabinet for Health and Family Services  
Department for Public Health  
275 E. Main Street  
Frankfort, KY 40621

[www.chfs.ky.gov/dph](http://www.chfs.ky.gov/dph)

# How do you know if you have a bed bug problem?

Look closely at all bedding and bedroom furniture (mattress, box-springs, bed frame, headboard, etc.). Bed bugs may be difficult to find. You will need to look for blood or small dark spots especially in and around the seams of the mattress.

Look for any marks on your skin. You may see small bite marks in the morning. These bites may itch. Bed bugs usually bite while people are sleep-

ing during the day or night. Other bug bites can leave similar marks. Not all people who are bitten by bed bugs will have bite marks.

The chances of having bed bugs increases if you or someone in your family have traveled recently or have gotten used furniture before noticing the bed bug marks.

## How do you get rid of bed bugs?

- If you live in an apartment building and think there are bed bugs, you need to call your landlord about the problem. Call the Local Health Department for more information. All apartments in a building with bed bugs need to be checked and treated. You or your landlord need to call a licensed Pest Control company to schedule an appointment for an inspection and treatment.

- Pick up everything in the infested room, and put anything that you need to keep in a zippered plastic bag. Put it in a hot, sunny place (120°F minimum) or in below freezing (below 32°F) for a couple weeks.

- Bedding and clothing will need to be bagged and washed in hot water (120°F minimum) or thrown away.

- When trying to clean carpets from bed bugs, vacuuming will not be enough. You must steam clean this area at a temperature of at least 120°F. The carpet may need to be replaced.

- If mattresses and box springs are badly infested, spray paint a warning sign on both or slash both of them, and seal with plastic. Contact the Division of Solid Waste in your county for special pick-up for these items.

- For less severe cases, zippered covers (available at bedding and allergy supply stores) may be used to keep bed bugs off the mattress and box springs.



*This mattress shows signs of blood and fecal staining from bed bugs.*



## How can bed bugs be prevented?

- Do not pick up any used furniture or mattresses/box springs from the roadside or by garbage containers.

- If you have gotten furniture from a rental service, always check the seams and any creased areas for bed bugs.

- When traveling, check all motel rooms thoroughly before setting your luggage on the floor or bed.

- Do not sit on furniture or lay in beds where you think there may be a problem.

- While cleanliness is not a major factor in fighting bed bugs, it is a good idea not to have clutter around your home or in your room.

- Once bed bugs are in a building, they often spread from room to room. Completely checking the problem is necessary so all areas can be treated to prevent spreading.