

## Bed Bugs ~ Key Points

### How do I know if I have bed bugs?

- ✓ Have you seen bed bugs?
  - Eggs – tiny, white, and glued to surfaces, look like a grain of rice.
  - Adults look like apple seeds or ticks - about ¼ inch long and reddish brown.
  - Young bed bugs are light-colored and smaller.
  - Six legs, oval, flattened top to bottom.
  - Do not jump or fly, but are good runners.
  - Tend to congregate together.
- ✓ Other signs - Small, whitish shed skins and rusty spots from their droppings, blood spots on bedding.
- ✓ Has someone been bitten? Bed bug bites sometimes occur in rows or clusters, but bites alone are not a reliable sign of an infestation.

### Where do bed bugs hide? Anywhere people sleep, sit or rest.

- ✓ Beds – Seams, tags, folds, crevices of mattresses, box springs, bed frames and headboards.
- ✓ Upholstered chairs, recliners, sofas – seams, tags, skirts, folds of fabric and underneath.
- ✓ Nightstands, dressers, edges of carpeting especially behind furniture.
- ✓ In tiny cracks and crevices in wood furniture, screw and nail holes, behind pictures and mirrors.
- ✓ Inside switch plates, electrical outlets, clocks, computers, phones, TVs and smoke alarms.
- ✓ Generally any small narrow spaces close to the resting place.

### Are bed bugs a public health concern?

- ✓ Bed bugs are not known to spread disease.
- ✓ Bites may cause red, itchy welts. Contact your health care provider with concerns.

### What can the health department do about bed bugs?

- ✓ Scott County Health Department provides information to property owners, managers, and residents.
- ✓ There are no public health laws in the Iowa Code that pertain to bed bugs.

### What should I do if I rent?

- ✓ Contact the owner or manager immediately.
- ✓ Carefully follow all instructions given by the owner/manager and the pest control company.

### What if my owner/manager does not take action? Do I still have to pay rent?

- ✓ It is recommended you continue to pay your rent.
- ✓ Contact Iowa Legal Aid – Davenport office 563-322-6216.
- ✓ Questions and answers for tenants about bed bugs.  
<http://www.iowalegalaid.org/resource/questions-and-answers-for-tenants-about-bedbu>

- ✓ Iowa Landlord and Tenant Law Summary.  
<http://www.iowalegalaid.org/resource/summary-of-iowa-landlord-and-tenant-law?ref=ix6OU>

### What should I do if I have bed bugs?

- ✓ Don't panic. Bed bugs can show up anywhere, even in clean homes and first class hotels.
- ✓ Consider using a professional pest control company.
- ✓ Learn all you can about bed bugs and their control. Get busy; there is much you can do.
- ✓ Inspect everything thoroughly. Know where to look. Bed bugs can hide in the tiniest cracks.
- ✓ Clean extensively. Normal routine cleaning is not enough.
- ✓ Get rid of unused items.
- ✓ De-clutter your living area, especially in bedrooms. With more places to hide, the bugs will be harder to eliminate.
- ✓ Helpful resources
  - Bed Bugs How To Protect Yourself And Your Home  
<http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/pesticides/pdf/files/bb-book.pdf>
  - Bed Bugs Inspection-Prevention-Control  
<http://www.linncounty.org/documentcenter/view/126>

### If I find bed bugs do I have to get rid of my bed, my furniture, or my belongings?

It is usually not necessary to throw these things away; inspect and clean everything.

#### Beds and Mattresses

- ✓ Inspect and clean beds (mattresses, headboard, box springs, and frames) to remove bed bugs, droppings and eggs. About 70% of all bed bugs are found on the mattress, box springs, and bed frame.
- ✓ Enclose mattresses and box springs in protective covers designed specifically for bed bug containment. The covers trap bed bugs inside where they will die. They also keep bed bugs from getting into mattresses and box springs. Good quality covers have tight zippers, smooth surfaces, and are tightly woven. Walmart, Kmart, Lowe's, Home Depot, Menards, Sears and Bed Bath & Beyond have these covers on line and in some local stores.
- ✓ Use bed bug monitors, such as ClimbUp® Bed Bug Interceptors to keep bed bugs from crawling up beds and furniture legs. Place legs of furniture into these bed bug barrier dishes to trap any bed bugs coming from or going to your bed. These monitors are available on line from various vendors.



- ✓ Keep bed at least six inches away from the wall, and don't let bedding touch the floor.

## Furniture

- ✓ Use a flashlight to thoroughly inspect all seams, joints, and crevices.
- ✓ Use a putty knife to scrape bed bugs and eggs out of crevices or cracks
- ✓ Clean, scrub, thoroughly vacuum all items within the infested area.
- ✓ Empty vacuum contents outdoors into a plastic bag, tie it and discard in outdoor garbage bin.
- ✓ *Note - To prevent bed bugs from getting into the vacuum cleaner, insert a knee-high nylon stocking in the end of the vacuum hose; then insert the crack and crevice attachment to hold the stocking in place. The bed bugs will be captured in the toe of the stocking. When you are finished vacuuming, remove the stocking, tie a knot in the top and place in a tightly sealed plastic bag for immediate disposal in an outdoor trash container.*

## Bedding, Clothing and Belongings

- ✓ Heat (120°) kills bed bugs and their eggs.
- ✓ Place sheets, blankets, pillow cases and towels in a dryer on the hottest setting that won't damage the items for at least 30 minutes.
- ✓ Place dryer safe clothing, curtains, pillows, stuffed animals, and similar items in the dryer on the hottest setting for at least 30 minutes.
- ✓ Store clean and dry items in tightly closed plastic bags until your home has been treated and the bed bugs are gone.
- ✓ Best practices for the use of a clothes dryer as a killing agent.
  - Take all dryable items and place them in large garbage bags.
  - Tie the bags closed to keep bed bugs from getting out.
  - Take the bags to the dryer, untie them, empty them directly into the dryer, and retie the now empty bag to keep bed bugs from getting out.
  - Throw the empty tied bag away
  - Dry all items on high for 30 minutes.
  - Take items out of the dryer, shake them out and remove any dead bugs.
  - Place the dried items into new, clean garbage bags, and tie the bags closed to prevent any bed bugs from reinfesting the items.

## Choosing a Pest Control Company

- ✓ Contact a professional pest control company experienced in dealing with bed bugs. It is extremely difficult to get rid of them on your own.
- ✓ Ask for instructions – what to do before and after treatment.
- ✓ Ask for and check references.

## Pesticide Concerns

All types of pesticides have limited effectiveness against bed bugs.

- ✓ No single chemical treatment will get rid of all bed bugs.
- ✓ Bed bugs are resistant to most pesticides.
- ✓ Pesticides applied by professional pest control companies may be more effective than “over the counter” products available to homeowners.
- ✓ Pesticides must be sprayed directly on the bed bugs to kill them.

Pesticides are Poison. Misuse Is Dangerous and Can Make the Problem Worse.

- ✓ The label is the law – Always read and follow label instructions EXACTLY.
- ✓ Make sure the label says it kills bed bugs.
- ✓ Make sure the label says it is OK for indoor use.
- ✓ Do not use near food or dishes or on bedding unless the label says it is intended for such use.
- ✓ Never use more product than the label says.
- ✓ Bug bombs and foggers don't work, can spread the infestation and are dangerous.

### **Don't Waste Time and Money on Things That Don't Work**

- ✓ Don't throw your bed, furniture and belongings away unless necessary. Anything new you bring in will quickly become infested unless you get rid of the bed bugs first.
- ✓ Don't move out of the bedroom and onto the couch to sleep. Bed bugs feed on blood and are attracted to exhaled carbon dioxide. The bed bugs will find you.
- ✓ Don't move out of your home. You may take the bed bugs with you and spread the problem.
- ✓ Don't raise the indoor temperature with the thermostat. Although heat kills bed bugs, raising the indoor temperature with the thermostat will not work and could present a fire hazard
- ✓ Don't use a torch, torpedo heater or space heater. Only professional pest control experts should use heat as method to kill bed bugs. Extreme cold can kill bed bugs, however home freezers do not get cold enough.
- ✓ Don't use insect repellents. They do not work on bed bugs.
- ✓ Don't pick up used furniture without thoroughly inspecting it and cleaning it.

### **Tips for Travelers**

- ✓ Use luggage racks when packing and unpacking – Do not put luggage on the bed or floor.
- ✓ Check the mattress, box springs, frame and headboard for signs of bed bugs.
- ✓ At home unpack directly into a washing machine and inspect your luggage carefully.