

Bedbug Information Residential Life Minnesota State University, Mankato

If you think you have been bitten by bedbugs:

Students living on campus: contact Residential Life at 507-389-1011. Residential Life will work with a pest control agency to investigate and respond. You may be required to move to a different room for a period of time. There is no additional charge.

Students living off campus: contact a pest control agency and request that they investigate and provide recommendations. Notify your landlord. Review your lease to see if you are responsible for charges or if your landlord is responsible.

The following information is provided to help you understand bedbugs:

Identification: Bedbugs are reddish-brown insects with an oval shape. They are about 5mm (1/5") long. Their body is flat from top to bottom. Their head is noticeably smaller than their abdomen. They have tiny wing pads instead of wings. Under magnification their needle-like, piercing-sucking mouthparts are visible. Immature bedbugs (nymphs) look like the adults except that they are much smaller in size. Eggs are yellowish white; the female bug "glues" them into crevices. Eggs are only 1 mm long.



Bedbug and nymph exoskeleton



Adult Bedbug

Are There Other Insects That Look Like Bedbugs? Bat bugs are the most common bedbug look-alike. Others include species that feed on barn swallows, chimney swifts, poultry, pigeons and starlings. When there is a question, get it identified!

Where to look for Bedbugs: Look for bedbugs in any place that offers darkness, isolation, protection, and easy access to their hosts (sleeping people!). Always inspect the location listed in this checklist:

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| <input type="radio"/> Folds and tufts of mattresses, box springs | <input type="radio"/> In chairs and other furniture | <input type="radio"/> Behind wall-mounted headboards common in motels(lift the headboard off its brackets) |
| <input type="radio"/> Cracks and hollow posts of headboards | <input type="radio"/> In clock radios and any other appliances | <input type="radio"/> In the nap (fibers) of the carpet itself |
| <input type="radio"/> Upholstery of chairs and sofas | <input type="radio"/> Behind door and window casings | <input type="radio"/> In draperies and drapery hardware |
| <input type="radio"/> Behind pictures | <input type="radio"/> In lamp bases and ceiling light fixtures | |
| <input type="radio"/> In nightstands | | |

Pull carpet back from walls and inspect beneath the carpet, between the carpet tack strip and the wall. When pulling carpet up, do so in small sections; pulling up large sections of carpet may result in your being unable to make the carpet fit in place when you try to put it back!

An easily detected sign of bedbugs (or bat bugs) is that bed linens will have many small blood spots. This blood may come from bedbug feces, or from bedbugs that were crushed by the bed's occupant. You should also look for living bedbugs, dead bedbugs crushed by the sleeping victim, any cast exoskeletons of bedbugs nymphs.

In heavy infestations, a sickeningly sweet odor may be detected upon entering the room.

Are They Increasing? In the 1940's and early 1950's, bedbugs were the most important pest we encountered. They dropped to near zero in numbers, mainly because of the invention and widespread use of DDT. But now, they are on the increase again, probably due to increased international travel.

What Is Its Life Cycle? Females lay 4 to 5 eggs per day. A single female can lay 100 to 500 eggs in her lifetime. Eggs hatch in 6 to 10 days, but in cool areas it may take as long as 30 days. The nymphs, which hatch from eggs, go through a series of 5 instars; it takes 1 to 5 months before the adult is formed.

Where Do Bedbugs Lay Their Eggs? Adult female bedbugs deposit their eggs in many different places. Most commonly the eggs are placed on the mattress, inside a box spring, behind peeling wallpaper, behind walls and baseboards, near the edges of rugs, and in closets.

What Do They Eat? Both nymphs and adults feed only on blood. Bedbugs feed on humans, chickens, rabbits, dogs, cats, mice, pigeons and sparrows. They prefer humans.

How Long Can Bedbugs Go Without Feeding? Below 60 degrees F., their activity is reduced. During the winter, bedbugs can survive without feeding. They can survive a year or more without a meal.

Where Do Bedbugs Come From? One reason for the recent resurgence of bedbugs, which were considered almost extinct in the U.S. during the 1970s and 1980s, is the increase in travel from one country to another; bedbugs are being brought back into the United States from countries where they remained abundant after they were no longer a serious pest in the U.S. Bedbugs are commonest in motels, where travelers may bring them from other countries; and in rooming houses and apartment buildings, where turnover of residents is high. They are brought into these buildings on the luggage and other belongings of people. In apartment buildings, bedbugs will spread easily from one apartment to the next, especially if people vacate an infested apartment. Bedbugs are also carried from one house to another in furniture and bedding via moving vans. Once common way bedbugs get started in a home is when people buy or receive used furniture from a home that has bedbugs.

Where Do Bedbugs Bite People? They bite people on the legs, arms, face, and body regions. Some people are more sensitive to the bite than others. Generally, the bite is not felt while it is being administered by the bug, but people know afterwards that they have been bitten. A bite causes severe itching and a large red spot, and may cause very severe allergic reactions in some individuals.

What Are The Health Effects on Humans? While bedbugs have been known to harbor pathogens in their bodies, including plague and hepatitis B, they have not been linked to the transmission of any disease and are not regarded as a medical threat. Some individuals, however, can get skin infections and scars from scratching bites from allergic reactions. While bedbugs are not regarded as a vector of transmissible diseases, they may be a significant source of stress, alarm and/or distress. With some individuals, it may precipitate mild to moderate cases of delusional parasitosis. Bedbugs do not carry or transmit diseases to humans.

How Do You Get Rid of Bedbugs? Bedbugs can be killed using extreme heat (greater than 120F), extreme cold (less than 32F), steam, and insecticide. Their numbers can be reduced by vacuuming prior to treatment.