

Bedbug Clean-Up and Prevention

HOW DOES A DWELLING BECOME INFESTED WITH BEDBUGS?

Bedbugs can be carried into homes unknowingly in luggage, clothing, blankets and pillows. Homes with second-hand furniture may be especially vulnerable to infestation. No home is immune to a bedbug infestation.

Bedbugs can be found on linen, mattresses (in protected areas like seams), bed springs, headboards, furniture used for sleeping, in and around sleeping areas, or even between floor boards and behind baseboards. Look for living or dead bedbugs, small bloodstains from crushed insects, or dark spots from droppings.



HOW CAN I GET RID OF BEDBUGS?

A licensed pest control professional can be hired to regularly inspect and quickly address infestations.

These practical recommendations can be followed:

- Thoroughly check luggage, clothing, and rooms.
- If a room is infested, all machine-washable bedding, curtains, rugs, towels, and clothes should be cleaned separately in the hottest water and dried on the hottest recommended cycle.
- Dry clean materials if needed and ALERT the drycleaner of ANY infested clothing!
- STORE CLEAN ITEMS IN PLASTIC BAGS
- Scrub mattress seams with a stiff brush to dislodge bedbugs and their eggs. If mattress material is not intact, bugs could be inside.
- To remove some bedbugs and eggs, use a heavy duty vacuum cleaner - equipped with disposable bags - on the mattress, bed frame, furniture, floor and carpet.
- Pay special attention to cracks and spaces, baseboards and wall seams.
- Discard the used vacuum bag in a sealed plastic bag immediately after clean-up.
- Place infested mattresses or box springs in zippered plastic covers (especially made for allergen reduction). It has been suggested that these items be stored for at least one year before using them again.

- Securely bag all discarded materials to prevent further infestation.
- Repair cracks in plaster and loose wallpaper.
- Seal cracks around the baseboards of the room completely with caulking material.
- Treat the room with special cleaning products and/or pesticides, if necessary. (NOTE: Commercial pesticides may only be applied by certified pest control operators – in Alberta these professionals are certified by Alberta Environment)

ARE PESTICIDES NECESSARY?

The best way to control a bedbug infestation is by conducting frequent, regular cleaning and eliminating their hiding places. Since bedbugs can live for several months without food and water, pest control professionals may recommend the use of a pesticide.

Make sure your exterminator provides information on:

- The pesticide to be applied
- How to prepare a room for treatment
- How to check a room after treatment
- How any mattresses and upholstered furniture are treated
- When is it safe to re-enter treated areas
- Precautions for sensitive individuals (pregnant, asthmatic, immunocompromised)

HOW CAN I KEEP THE BUILDING'S FURNITURE FROM SPREADING INFESTATION?

Never resell or donate infested furniture.

When throwing away an infested furniture:

- Cut holes in it so it can't be reused.
- Seal it in a large plastic bag to prevent spread of the bedbugs or eggs during transport.
- Tape a sign to it that says, "Infested with Bedbugs".
- Renters should notify the management office so that the furniture can be removed as soon as possible from the garbage pick up area.



Actual size: approx. 3mm x 5mm

Adapted from pamphlet
"TRAVEL ACCOMMODATIONS and BEDBUGS"
-Photo credit: Harvard University

For more information, please contact your nearest Environmental Public Health office.