

Prevention

Bed bugs are hard to prevent because of their small size, night habits, and ability to hitchhike. Here are some tips to get you started:

- **Know your surroundings.** If you return home from a place where bed bugs may have been, do not go or take possessions such as luggage or clothing directly to your bed. Instead, prevent any chance of bed bug reinfestation by laundering and quarantining potential hitchhiking bugs.
- **Inspect previously owned items** thoroughly before bringing them home. Look for groups of small white eggs and red-brown bed bugs stuck in fabric, cushions, or small openings on furniture. Do not pick up items that were thrown out because you could bring someone else's problem home.

How do they spread?

Bed bugs are excellent hitchhikers. They can easily move from an infested building to a new site as people move. The recent resurgence of bed bugs is due in large part to international travel. Bed bugs hitchhike on luggage or on personal items or clothing and can move from one country to another in a very short period of time. Within a community, bed bugs can spread when people move infested possessions into a new apartment or home. Purchasing infested, second-hand beds or other furniture has been shown to accelerate local outbreaks of bed bugs. Once inside a building bed bugs can move between rooms or apartments by walking or crawling via hallways, or by squeezing through tiny cracks in common walls, ceilings, or utility ports.

How can I prevent bed bugs from entering my home?

The most valuable form of home protection is becoming aware of the threat of bed bugs. Understand where and how they travel. Know what they look like and how to inspect for them. Be very careful about purchasing or bringing home second-hand upholstered furniture and clothing. Always closely inspect items for signs of infestation. Launder any items that can be laundered in hot soapy water and dry with hot air. Bed bugs will not survive this regime. Make vacuuming, cleaning, decluttering and inspecting a regular habit. Steam or heat treatments must be applied to anything that is suspect, before it enters the house.

How do I protect myself from bed bugs while traveling?

Be alert and aware when travelling. If you suspect bed bug infestations, use common sense and what you know about bed bugs to help avoid bringing them home with you. Inspect your hotel room for signs of an infestation **BEFORE** you move your belongings in. Some travelers will place their luggage in the bathtub or on a wooden chair or desk rather than on a bed while they perform this inspection. Carefully inspect the

mattress seams, headboard, and furniture around the bed for fecal specks, cast skins, or live bed bugs. If bed bugs or signs of bed bugs are found, immediately report this to the registration desk and ask for a different room. When returning home, carefully check luggage seams and clothing for any signs of bed bugs before bringing it into your home. Clothing can be immediately washed and dried to ensure that no bed bugs will hitchhike on it. If other possessions and luggage are found to have bed bugs on it, do not take them into the home. Arrange for heat or other reliable treatment of the articles in question.

How do I inspect a hotel room for bed bugs?

Checking into hotel rooms:

Remember the old adage 'an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.' This has never been more true than in our battle with bed bugs. Avoiding them in the first place is the best prevention.

When checking into a hotel ask if bed bugs have been found there or if treatments for bed bugs have occurred.

Once at your room, do not put your luggage, coat or personal belongings on the bed. Rather use luggage racks, table tops, leave at front door/hall, or place in bathtub upon entry.

Thoroughly inspect the room before unpacking.

Inspection Steps:

- Use a flashlight.
- Remove top comforter (this seldom receives the laundry regime that sheets do).
- Pull back the hotel bed sheets and inspect the mattress seams, particularly the corners, for telltale brownish or reddish specks (fecal specks).
- Look behind the head-board if possible, paying close attention to tight cracks and crevices.
- Inspect folds, cracks and crevices of furniture near the bed.
- Inspect the carpeting and base boards nearest to the bed.

If you suspect a bed bug infestation, contact the management - ask to be moved and not just next door.