

## Bed Bugs



Photo by:  
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**The Bed Bug:** a small, flat, oval bloodsucking insect, with a reddish-brown color, reduced wings, and an unpleasant odor. The common bed bug infests houses and particularly beds. It hides during the day and feeds at night, sucking the blood of humans and other mammals. Two to four generations are produced yearly, depending on the temperature and the consistency of the food supply. The nymphs resemble the adults, and they mature in about 11 weeks. Other species of bed bugs feed on bats and certain birds.

### Bed Bugs...



#### ***What do they look like?***

Adult bed bugs are oval shaped, flattened and about 6mm long. When unfed they are pale brown in color but become reddish brown to mahogany when full of blood. Young bugs (nymphs) are nearly colorless, becoming brownish as they mature.

#### ***Where do they live?***

Bed bugs are usually found in unsuspected areas such as in floor cracks, under carpets, behind loose wallpaper, wall pictures, loose skirting boards and door frames, and in the seams of bed mattresses etc. Basically, Bed Bugs will hide in any crack and crevice that they can find. Dorms and fancy hotels are even being invaded by these creatures, as you've probably heard from news reports.

#### ***What do they eat?***

The bed bug feeds exclusively on blood, generally only in darkness. Although human blood is preferred, they can survive on other blood from rabbits, rodents etc.

### ***What can you do about it?***

It is very important that nothing from the room be removed until your Pest Management Specialist identifies the problem and determines the extent of the infestation. Adjoining rooms, common rooms and laundry areas would have to be included in the inspection. If mattresses, cloths, or any belongings that have been exposed are removed improperly, the risk of nymphs or adult Bed Bugs dropping off and contaminating other areas will be great. Bed Bugs can also become a problem by hitching rides on humans that have been in areas where Bed Bugs are breeding along with a family dog lying near an infested area. This becomes a problem if the person does not realize they have been exposed and ends up being a taxi service for the Bed Bug. It is very important (and good sanitation practice!) to cover your mattress and box-spring with a high quality mattress cover that zips over the entire mattress. The cotton, nylon lined covers prove to be the most comfortable and will not cause perspiring during the warmer months.

### ***Can a homeowner or landlord handle the treatment themselves?***

Not advisable! As a homeowner, you can cause further infestation throughout the premises by not knowing or having the experience. As a Landlord you are opening yourself up for liabilities you don't want. As for the do-it-yourself products that you can get on the internet, well, better check with your D.E.C. office and make sure that the website is selling products that are legal to sell in your state. Stay away from out-of-state or out-of-country websites! There are many of these websites that are not approved by the Attorney Generals office and most likely do not coincide with your state laws mandated by the Department of Environmental Conservation. When in doubt, call your local state facility of Cooperative Extension and have them look at the website.

### ***How can you tell if a Pest Management Company is qualified in handling a Bed Bug problem in YOUR home?***

Past experience has proven to show me "You get what you pay for". If a company promises to eliminate your Bed Bug problem for a song and a dance, that may be all you get, a song and a dance. To begin with, any company that does not make a thorough inspection lasting less than one hour, is probably not the company you want to hire. The key to a successful inspection and treatment is time spent. Treating for Bed Bugs is a time consuming effort as well as a costly one. Any reputable company treating for Bed Bugs will supply you with their arsenal of products that they will be using. An educated Pest Management Specialist will know that it is the law to supply labels and chemical release forms to a customer prior to treatment. A Pest Management Specialist also knows that

products should be used in more sensitive areas, such as mattress, and that the law requires the product to be labeled for such use. No one wants to be putting themselves or their child in jeopardy of chemical exposure. There are products that your Pest Management Specialist can give you to treat pillows and crib mattresses. These products can be used in conjunction with a professional treatment and must be applied according to the label.

Do your homework. Get educated. An educated consumer is the best customer to an experienced and reputable Pest Management Company.

\*Make sure that upon hiring a Pest Management Company, ask for references, ask to see a copy of their liability insurance and their Pest Control Operators License. This will help in your decision making.

