



# STOP BED BUGS SAFELY

## WHAT ARE BED BUGS?

Bed bugs are small insects that feed on human blood. They are usually active at night when people are sleeping. Adult bed bugs have flat rusty-red-colored oval bodies. Adult bed bugs are about the size of an apple seed, they are big enough to be easily seen, but often hide in cracks in furniture, floors, or walls. When bed bugs feed, their bodies swell and become brighter red. They can live for several months without feeding on a host.

## WHAT DOES A BED BUG BITE FEEL AND LOOK LIKE?

Most bed bug bites are initially painless, but later turn into large, itchy skin welts. These welts do not have a red spot in the center as do the bites from fleas.

## ARE BED BUGS DANGEROUS?

Although bed bugs and their bites are a nuisance, they are not known to spread diseases.

## HOW DOES A HOME BECOME INFESTED WITH BED BUGS?

In most cases, people carry bed bugs into their homes unknowingly, in infested luggage, furniture, bedding, or clothing. Bed bugs may also travel between apartments through small crevices and cracks in walls and floors.

## HOW DO I KNOW IF MY HOME IS INFESTED WITH BED BUGS?

You may notice itchy skin welts. You may also see the bed bugs themselves, small bloodstains from crushed insects, or dark spots from their droppings. It is often hard to find them because they hide in or near beds, other furniture, and in cracks.

## HOW CAN I KEEP BED BUGS OUT OF MY HOME?

- Wash clothing and inspect luggage immediately after returning from a trip.
- Inspect used furniture for bed bugs before bringing it into your home.
- Never bring discarded bed frames, mattresses, box springs, or upholstered furniture into your home.

## HOW CAN I KEEP MY FURNITURE FROM INFESTING SOMEONE ELSE'S HOME?

- Never resell or donate infested furniture or clothing.
- If you throw away mattresses and/or box springs, please contact your management office for encasements. Put on the encasements in your apartment, not at the dump site.

## HOW CAN I GET RID OF BED BUGS?

### 1. Find out where bed bugs are hiding in your home.

Use a bright flashlight to look for bed bugs or their dark droppings in bedroom furniture.

- Behind your headboard.
- In the seams and tufts of your mattress and inside the box spring.
- Along bedroom baseboard cracks.
- In and around nightstands.
- Other bedroom items, including window and door casings, pictures, moldings, nearby furniture, loose wallpaper, cracks in plaster and partitions, and clutter.

### 2. Clean areas where bed bugs are likely to hide.

- Clean bedding, linens, curtains, rugs, carpets, and clothes. To kill bed bugs, wash items in hot water and dry them on the highest dryer setting. Soak delicate clothes in warm water with lots of laundry soap for several hours before rinsing. Wool items, plush toys, shoes, and many other items can be placed into a hot dryer for 30 minutes to get rid of bed bugs.
- Scrub mattress seams with a stiff brush to dislodge bed bugs and their eggs.
- Vacuum carpets in affected areas and throw away debris in taped bags.



Actual size

Michael F. Potter, University of Kentucky ©2004

## WHERE CAN I GET HELP?

Call the New York City Housing Authority Customer Contact Center (CCC) at: **718-707-7771**.



For more information about the New York City Housing Authority, please visit us online at: **[www.nyc.gov/nycha](http://www.nyc.gov/nycha)**

A translation of this document is available in your management office and online at [www.nyc.gov/nycha](http://www.nyc.gov/nycha).

La traducción de este documento está disponible en su oficina de administración y en Internet en [www.nyc.gov/nycha](http://www.nyc.gov/nycha).

文件譯本可到屋邨管理辦事處或上網[www.nyc.gov/nycha](http://www.nyc.gov/nycha)索取。

Перевод этого документа находится в Вашем домоуправлении и на интернете [www.nyc.gov/nycha](http://www.nyc.gov/nycha).