Bed Bug FAQ

By DoMyOwn staff

When preparing to do your own bed bug control, you will likely have many questions. We have answered thousands of real customer questions about bed bug control and this list contains the top 10 questions we get. If you don't see your question in this list, fill this form out and we'll answer it for you!

Top 10 Bed Bug Questions from Customers:

1. **How do I get rid of Bed Bugs?** See: How to Get Rid of Bed Bugs to learn how to kill a bed bug infestation yourself.
2. **What is the best spray for Bed Bugs?** See our product recommendation here.
3. **Is it safe to spray my mattress for Bed Bugs?** It is safe to spray if you use a product that is labeled for mattress use. Some of the products labeled for this include: Bedlam, temprid sc, and steri-fab.
4. **Will these Bed Bug control products kill the eggs too?** No. It's best to just be thorough with your treatment and not rely on trying to kill the eggs.
5. **Is there a Bed Bug product I can take when I travel?** Yes! See our Bed bug travel kits and products.
6. **If I put my clothes/items in a bag, is there something I can spray inside that will kill all the Bed Bugs inside?** No. You will need to wash all the items in the bag in hot water and then dry using high heat to kill anything inside. It's not recommended to spray clothes directly with bed bug control products.
7. **Why do I need to use more than one product for bed bug control?** Two reasons: First, most products cannot be used in every area of the room. For example, some products that can be sprayed in cracks and crevaces should not be sprayed in electrical outlets, etc. Second, to avoid any issues with chemical resistance. Bed bugs are very good at building up a resistance to bed bug killers and it is absolutely neccesary to try multiple methods and products to ensure their extermination.
8. **Other tenants in my apartment building have Bed Bugs. How can I prevent them from coming into my apartment?** See our article about apartment bed bug control. Also read our Bed Bug Prevention Guide.
9. **How do I know if my hotel room has Bed Bugs?** See our article about avoiding Hotel Bed bugs. Also see our Bed Bug Inspection Guide to learn how to find bed bugs in your hotel room.
10. **What do bed bug bites look like?** See: Bed Bug Bites

Continue reading below for additional bed bug questions.

What do bed bugs look like?
The bed bug is oval in shape, wingless, and rusty red or mahogany in color with a flattened body. It is about 1/5 inch long, or, the size of an apple seed. Read our bed bug identification article to learn more about what bed bugs look like.

Can a bed bug be seen with the naked eye?
Yes, if there is a bed bug on you or crawling around on your sheets, you will likely see it. The problem is that bed bugs do not often just crawl around in the open. They stay well hidden in tight spaces during the day, and come out only at night for feeding time.

Do bed bugs really drink human blood?
Yes. A bed bug can take six times its weight in human blood during a nighttime feeding, and feeding can take 3 to 10 minutes.

How long can bed bugs survive without a blood meal?
It's not as easy as you would think to starve these little guys out by, say, just leaving your home for a couple of weeks. Bed bugs can survive without food (human blood) for 80 to 140 days; older stages can survive up to a year or longer without feeding than younger ones.

How will I know if I have bed bugs?
You may suspect bed bugs if you wake up with bites or welts on your body (small, red rashes) that grown itchy and painful, and especially if this happens repeatedly. Other signs of infestation can be detected with a magnifying glass and flashlight. What to look for: 1) tiny black spots (excrement) on linens or other objects
2) small red stains from crushed bed bugs
3) translucent light brown skin casings
4) live bed bugs that rusty-red in color, about the size of an apple seed.

I know I have bed bugs, but I can't seem to actually FIND any. Where do these suckers hide out when they aren't eating me?
You have to look very carefully to locate where the bed bugs are hiding. It will be someplace close to their food source, but where they are not disturbed during the day. Some common bed bug harborages include:

- Inside mattress folds, creases, zippers, and tags
- Anything attached to the wall or ceiling: mirrors, picture frames, electrical conduits, smoke detectors, etc.
- Areas where hardware for window finishings mount to the wall
- Within the folds of drapes and curtains.
- Furniture such as sofas and chairs: Check the undersides, wooden framework, and within upholstered seams.
- Inside the cracks and crevices of drawers and nightstands. On recessed nail and screw heads.

What is the difference between a bed bug and flea bite?
A bed bug bite starts out painless and later becomes an itchy, red welt. These welts may occasionally bleed. The main difference between bed bug and flea bites is that a flea bite has a red dot in the center of it, while the bed bug bite does not have any red dot.

Will I get sick from bed bugs?
While bed bug bites are uncomfortable, bed bugs are not known to transmit disease and are not considered harmful.

I have tried to control the bed bugs myself, but don't seem to be getting anywhere. When should I call a professional?
If you feel at all uncomfortable performing your own bed bug inspection and treatment, or the infestation seems to be out of your control, it is best to call in a pest control professional.

I keep my home very clean. Where did these bed bugs come from?
Unfortunately, a clean home is just as susceptible to bed bugs as a filthy one. All that is needed for an infestation to occur is for an infested item to be introduced into an un-infested environment. Bed bugs are most likely to be introduced upon returning from travel or when overnight guests are entertained. They can also hitch a ride into your home on items purchased second-hand, or furniture and bedding that is delivered to your home. Immediately after any of these events have taken place would be the ideal time to inspect for live bed bugs and other signs of infestation.

How can I get rid of bed bugs without exposing my family to so many chemicals? There is much you can do in the way of non-chemical control to prevent and control bed bugs. Some methods include the use of specially designed mattress encasements, vacuums, steamers, hot washer and dryer settings, the disposal of infested items, and the use of a non-chemical disinfectant like Sterifab.

What is all this about special bed bug mattress covers? Can't I just buy a regular mattress cover? For bed bug prevention and control, an ordinary mattress cover will **not** suffice. The reason for this is that bed bugs are able to escape or feed through the fibers of an ordinary cover. Bed Bugs are also able to find their way through the loose teeth of the side zipper unless it is specially designed. Using an ineffective encasement that was not designed for bed bug control will actually prove more detrimental than not using an encasement at all. We carry the full line of Bed Bug Mattress Covers that are bug entry, escape and bite proof.

Once I start a control program, how long will it take to achieve complete control?
You will see a significant improvement after the initial bed bug treatment. However, complete bed bug elimination takes patience, persistence, and time. Following an initial treatment and program implementation, you should continue to actively inspect the infested area for signs of bed bug infestation on a regular schedule (every 2 or 3 weeks) to monitor populations. Treatment will then need to be repeated on a bi-monthly to monthly bases until all signs of infestation disappear completely.

Do bed bugs spread disease or vector disease?

Diseases from Bed bugs: 0 cases

In the group of common ectoparasites throughout the world, bed bugs are not responsible for vectoring or spreading any diseases in humans. Most of the ectoparasite species are noted to spread a handful of harmful medical and veterinary diseases.

Bed bugs have not been registered to be a hazard medically. They are mostly noted to be an extreme annoyance. Bed bugs cause itching, rashes, loss of sleep, and potential bacterial infections from scratching. This is a secondary skin infection caused by dirty fingernails or germs introduced by you onto the fresh feeding wound.

Are there health risks with bed bugs?

The health implication comes to each victim differently, as all people react to bites uniquely. If people already have other allergies or insect allergies it can magnify the reaction to bed bug bites. Some allergic reactions may call for medical attention due to each person’s reaction and present medical conditions. So can bed bugs kill you? Are bed bugs dangerous? The answer is no, and they are only a mild health issue.

Do bed bugs feed on my pets?

- Bed bugs do feed on all kinds of pets if they cannot find a suitable host after hatching or at any point in the life cycle.
- Bed bugs can feed on dogs, though it is not a primary choice. They will get on dogs and are transported by them in some cases.
- Bed bugs will also feed on pet cats, birds, mice, rats, gerbils, and other mammals.
- They will also sustain a hiding place in pet bedding and fabrics

Why are bed bugs hard to kill?

- In recent genetic studies using mitochondrial DNA has shown that populations of bed bugs to have a high degree of genetic variability. This key factor allows the bed bug to become more resilient with each generation it creates. Bed bugs with this new adaptation can survive a variety of insecticide treatments.

How do bed bugs move?

The bed bug has six legs by which they move by crawling slowly at night towards the sleeping host. Bed bugs are armed jointed appendages and spikey hook like feet that allow it to climb and lock in for travel simply. They are extremely slow and most seek out the aid of night cover and hitchhiking. These two skills they have sharpened and become extremely successful at. The hooks or spikes on the feet of the bed bug allow it to lock on to clothing fibers in luggage, laundry, and furniture. The

modified feet not only help them travel securely they are also how they lock on to each other in mating, and how they get into tiny cracks and crevices to hide in during the daylight hours.

Do bed bugs fly?

The bed bug is in fact truly wingless unlike most insects. They do not have any structure or body part that resembles a wing or elytra. This simple fact that bed bugs do not fly would cause a problem for the species need to feed on blood of such a fast massive host right? Well when it comes to keeping up with humans they have solved the problem by becoming a highly skilled hitchhiker. The bed bugs tiny size allows them to hide anywhere in close proximity with humans and go unnoticed. The bed bug has adapted to never need wings to travel. They are masters of going unnoticed and waiting till the time is right to spring out and feed.

How do bed bugs spread?

Bed bugs spread by human interaction and movement. The bed bugs have adapted to travel along with us anywhere. Bed bugs can patiently wait as we travel long countless miles and days to settle. They are opportunistic insects that allow the human race to spread them around the world for free by any means via vacation, travel, work, and shipping. The modification of the bed bug species is to wait until they have a suitable location to start a population and then they magnify exponentially once the habitat is sufficient. This species almost spreads like a cold or a virus. The more contact, places we travel, and ways we travel are modes of transit for the bed bug.

How do you get bed bugs?

Generally speaking, you get them from other people and their property that is infested as unwanted gifts. The incorrect assumption is that dirty locations attract bed bugs and house bed bug populations. Although most dirty locations do attract a host of nasty insects that spread germs and contaminate areas, bed bugs are pleased with clean or dirty. Bed bugs are able to spread via human travel and movement. The unique flattened and small round shaped of the bed bug allows them to hide just about anywhere they can squeeze. They travel commonly by luggage. The best way to prevent the spreading of bed bugs is to check the rooms before you stay in hotels. The nicest and cleanest hotels can be infested. Always check locations, clothing, and travel to prevent the hitchhikers from ever gaining contact with you. Once one gets on board or gets into your luggage then you will be fighting this critter for countless hours. Travel safe and protect yourself at all times.

How to find bed bugs? And where do bed bugs hide?

Bed bugs are discrete and smart stowaways. The relatively minute size of the bed bug allows it to hide anywhere it chooses. Bed bugs are commonly found in close proximity to their food source, which is normally in or near the bedroom. They can hide in power outlets, small cracks, lose screws, clothes seems, ties, shoes, mattresses, box springs, bed frames, head boards, upholstered chairs, recliners, sofas, curtain seams, skirts, and any other folds in fabrics. Most people have many queries toward understanding where do bed bugs live? The simple truth is that bed bugs live side by side with us in our homes. Bed bugs will travel considerable distances to reach a host. What attracts bed bugs you may ask? They are attracted by high levels of heat and carbon dioxide or CO2.

*For more information on finding bed bugs, read our article:How to Find Bed Bugs

How can I travel without bringing bed bugs home?

There are many cautionary steps that can be taken when traveling to assure you will not be bringing any bed bug stowaways home. Some of these include:

- Always start by placing your luggage in the hotel bath tub. If you find bed bugs within the hotel room then they may have had time to get into the luggage. Placing your luggage in the bath tub helps to secure the luggage from being infested.
- Next, you should perform a thoroughinspection of the room with a bright flashlight.
- It is also good idea to carry and set up abed bug monitor traps to monitor for any bed bug activity.
- A smart way to prevent them from getting into the luggage at any potential location is to install abed bug proof luggage liner.
- Also in case bed bugs get on or in your soiled clothing it is good to place the clothing in a bed bug proof laundry bag.
- Sure way to prevent bed bugs from getting into your luggage by spraying it with products like Rest Easy bed bug spray, Steri-Fab, RestAsure Bed bug spray, or Essentria Bed bug Repellent
- You can also line the mattress you sleep on with a Mattress Safe's soft cover to lock the bed bugs in if they are present.
- Then for the people that have carry along travel pillows for their specific needs to place a PillowSafe Protector around them to keep the bed bugs from inhabiting your favorite pillow.
- Not all of these steps are necessary but it helps to be prepared opposed to unprepared.

Bed bugs on cruise ships:

- Yes, bed bugs can gain access to boats and cruise ships
- Check past cruise reports for bed bugs
- Ask if the cruise line encases the bedding
- Ask the cabin steward if bed bug problems occur, and how it has been treated
    - Most cruise lines heat rooms to over 120 degrees to kill all bed bugs
- Pack a flashlight and check rooms yourself to be safe
- Anti-bedbug laundry bags and anti-bedbug luggage liners are the safest ways to travel.

For more information & products, including Bed Bug Kits, see our Bed Bug Control Products page.

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