



Facts about Bed Bugs

Bed bugs can make their way into even the cleanest of homes, businesses and, yes, even hospitals. While bed bugs are not considered a health hazard, they are prevalent and can travel on the clothing or possessions of people or on pets, and are a nasty nuisance. Early identification and the help of professional pest control experts are advised.

The Yorkton Regional Health Centre has worked with a pest control company to eliminate bed bugs which were brought to the facility in the belongings of a patient. The problem was quickly discovered. Immediate actions were taken to kill the insects and monitoring traps are in place. Heat kills bed bugs. As a precaution, all rooms on the wing were deep steam-cleaned, in addition to the room where the insect was introduced. No pesticides were used.

Fact: Bed bugs do not transmit disease and are not considered a health hazard. According to research there are no known cases of infectious disease transmitted by bed bug bites.

Fact: Bed bugs are killed by exposure to heat. A temperature of 120°F kills bed bugs and bed bug eggs. Commercial steam units can reach 120°F to a depth of one-inch penetration into mattresses and upholstered furniture.

Fact: You can visually see adult bed bugs. Bed bugs are about the size of an apple seed, about 1/5 inch long, flattened and oval shaped. They range in colour from light to dark brown or reddish brown. Nymph bed bugs are smaller and often hard to see. The eggs are shaped like a grain of rice but are smaller. Bed bugs can leave behind black ink-like traces or red blood dots on sheets.

Fact: Bed bugs do not cling to people and cannot fly or jump. Unlike wood ticks, bed bugs have no physical mechanism to attach themselves to people. They cannot fly or jump, they crawl. Bed bugs are generally more active at night. They are attracted to concentrations of body heat and carbon dioxide.

Fact: Having bed bugs does not mean your home isn't clean and well kept. Bed bugs can travel on things such as clothing, luggage and furniture or household goods that are moved from one place to another.

What to do if you are travelling or returning home from somewhere that may have bed bugs:

- Put dirty clothes directly into your washing machine and wash in hot water and dry using a hot dryer.
- Put clean clothes into a hot dryer. A normal dryer load run for at least 15 to 20 minutes on medium to high heat should kill all stages of bed bug.
- Inspect and vacuum luggage upon return.

If you think you may have bed bugs in your home, place adhesive pest traps or double sided carpet tape around the legs of a bed or on the floor around the bed. If bed bugs are found:

- Vacuum or steam clean floors, cracks, crevices, baseboards and carpets.
- Put clothing and bedding in a medium to hot dryer for at least 15 to 20 minutes. Seal clean items in plastic bags until treatment is complete.
- Put bed bug proof covers over mattresses and do not remove them.
- Frequently vacuum. If bed bugs are present, remove and seal the vacuum bag in a plastic bag before putting it into the garbage.

It is advisable to call in the experts from a pest control company. Many now use heat treatment in combination with chemical treatment. A professional will give you the best advice and will know how to use different products and methods available to get the best results.