

What Are Bed Bugs?

Bed bugs (*Cimex lectularius*) fit into a category of blood-sucking ectoparasites (external parasites) similar to head lice (*Pediculus humanus capitis*). Bed bugs, like head lice, feed on the blood of humans but are not believed to transmit disease.

However, bed bugs cause a variety of negative physical health, mental health and economic consequences. Many people have mild to severe allergic reaction to the bites with effects ranging from no reaction to a small bite mark to, in rare cases, anaphylaxis (severe, whole-body reaction). These bites can also lead to secondary infections of the skin such as impetigo, ecthyma, and lymphangitis. Bed bugs may also affect the mental health of people living in infested homes. Reported effects include anxiety, insomnia and systemic reactions.

RESOURCES ON THE WEB...

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/Topics/bedbugs.htm>

Central Ohio Bed Bug Task Force
<http://centralohiobedbugs.org/>

Harvard School of Public Health
<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/bedbugs/>

OSU Extension
<http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/2000/2105.html>

Other brochures available include:

Preparing for a Winter Storm

Preparing for a Fire

Preparing for a Flood

Preparing for a Thunderstorm, Lightning or Tornado

Bird Flu

Preparing a First Aid Kit

Influenza and You

Preparing for an Influenza Pandemic

Pandemic Planning for Businesses

Preparing for Summer's Bugs and Insects

Swine, Bird, Flu and You

Avoiding Influenza: The Basics

Staying Healthy In Extreme Heat

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What You Need To Know About

Bed Bugs



Courtesy of the

Ross County



**Health
DISTRICT**

How do I know if I have bed bugs?

Online: <http://centralohiobedbugs.org>

What do I do if I have bed bugs?

A person sleeping in a bed infested with bed bugs will usually wake up in the morning with red, itchy, and possibly swollen bites or welts on their body. Some people have allergic reactions; some people have almost no reaction at all.

Bed bugs are small, flat, brown bugs, just 1/4 to 3/8 inch in size. They prefer to hide during the day, but dark spots (feces) may be seen near their hiding places, such as on mattresses, sheets, walls, baseboards or electrical outlets.

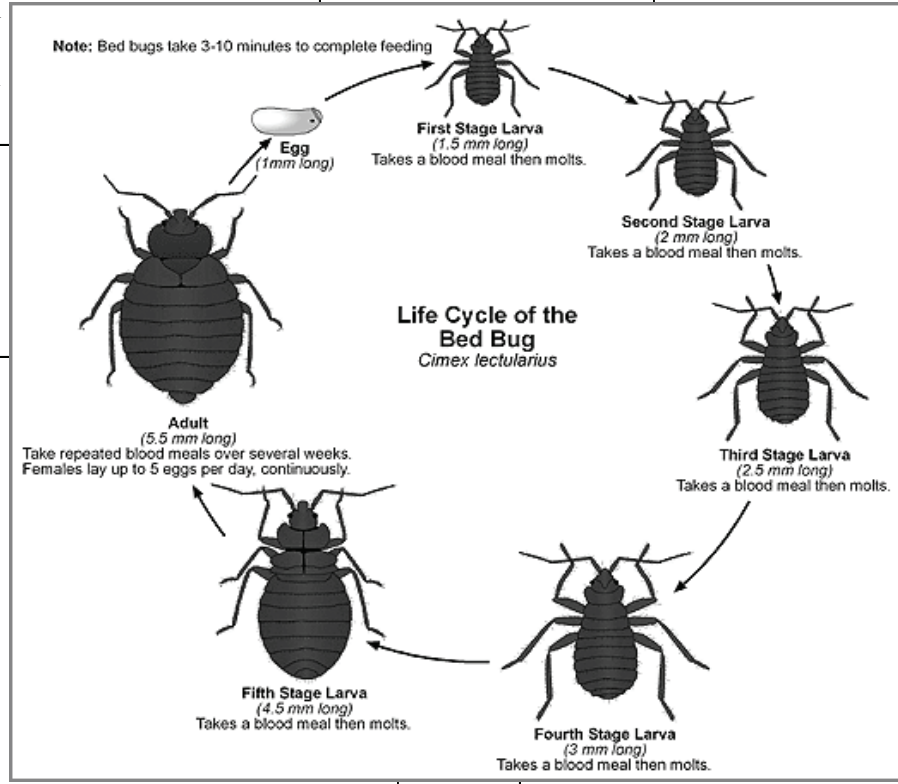
Getting rid of bed bugs can be a difficult process and is best left to a professional. However, not all pest control companies address bed bugs. You can call a company and ask if they treat for bed bugs, and you can also call the Ohio Department of Agriculture for information on what companies are licensed to do so: 1-800-282-1955, ext. 31.

It can be dangerous to try and treat for bed bugs yourself. The pesticides can be harmful to your health and the health of others in your home.

Travel Tips

Perhaps the most common place you'll find bed bugs is in hotel rooms. Some things you might want to do include: Ask to inspect your room before you accept it - checking for signs of bed bugs; keep your suitcase on the luggage rack, not on the floor; keep your clothing and other items in your suitcase, not on the bed or the floor; put worn clothing in a sealable plastic bag for the trip home; before packing up, check your clothing and luggage for signs of bed bugs.

Once you arrive home, if possible leave your luggage in the garage. Don't bring your clothing in until it can be washed and dried (in a hot dryer for at least 20 minutes). If you bring your luggage inside, it may be a good idea to put it in a sealed plastic bag.



Facts

- Fact:** Any home can have bed bugs, regardless of how clean it is.
- Fact:** If you live in an apartment or a duplex, you need to let the landlord know if there are bed bugs, or you suspect there are.
- Fact:** Bed bugs can live for up to one year without feeding.
- Fact:** A bed bug injects an anesthetic into the skin of its victim so they don't feel the bite.

Fact: Bed bugs do not spread disease, but bites can lead to skin infections such as impetigo; may cause anxiety and stress; and can lead to economic hardships when trying to get rid of them.