

BED BUG



DESCRIPTION

Bed bugs are oval in shape with a flat body and a short, broad head. Shaped similar to an apple seed, adults are approximately 3/16" (4 to 5mm) long and range from brown to reddish brown (after feeding) in colour. The upper body surface is covered with short, golden hairs. Nymphs are shaped similar to the adults, but are yellow-white in colour. Bed bug eggs are white, approximately 1mm long (1/25"), and are nearly impossible to see on most surfaces. The female bed bug will lay approximately 200 eggs in her lifetime, and will deposit them mostly into cracks and crevices as

well as many other hidden locations. Eggs will normally hatch within 6 to 17 days. Adults can survive for up to 12 to 18 months without feeding. When the temperature falls below 61F/16C, adults enter semi-hibernation and can survive for months.

HABITS

Bed bugs harbour in cracks and crevices during the day and come out to feed at night. Typically they can be found around mattress buttons and bedding, in boxsprings or their coverings, and in any crack or crevice. Other places to check for bed bugs are picture frames, night stands, stuffed furniture, baseboards, and floorboards, behind loose wallpaper, light switches, door and window frames, conduits, wall voids, attics and other enclosed places. They will crawl considerable distances to obtain a blood meal.

They can be introduced into a structure via used furniture or in belongings of someone who has been living in a bed bug infestation. With people travelling more than ever, bed bugs are often transported via luggage and articles of clothing from hotels back to people's homes. Bed bug infestations have been found in transportation vehicles such as boats, trains, airplanes and buses as well as in movie theatres where they typically harbour in the seats and associated frames. Bed bugs do not indicate a lack of cleanliness.

Besides an "obnoxiously sweet" odour the bed bug often emits from their scent glands, the other primary clues to an infestation will be the presence of bedbugs and/or small red to reddish brown fecal spots on surfaces. Allergic reaction on the skin and itchy welts may be indicative as well; however bed bugs are not known to carry any blood-borne diseases.



CONTROL

A thorough inspection is crucial. Treat any bed bugs found with an appropriately labelled pesticide. Mattress and box spring encasements should be used. In apartment buildings and hotels, it's advisable to also inspect units to either side and above and below the infested unit, and treat as required.

Control of bed bugs involves co-operation with home owners and/or tenants. Depending on size of infestations found, multiple treatments may be needed. Treat cracks and crevices, night stands, baseboards, floorboards, door and window frames, behind loose wallpaper, stuffed furniture, attics and other enclosed places, with properly labelled residual insecticide. Use insecticide dust in wall voids, light switches, conduits and under carpet seams.

Heat has the highest success rate in eliminating all life stages of bed bugs. Clothes or bedding that may be contaminated with bed bugs should be washed and put in the dryer at the highest temperature setting.

Vacuums are a great way to physically remove bed bugs from an area. Be sure to vacuum cracks and crevices where bed bugs hide. Also, when finished vacuuming, treat the hose with appropriately labelled pesticide and immediately throw away the vacuum bag to an outdoor garbage can.

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