

Bed Bug Infestations
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Cases of bed bug infestation (*Cimex Lectularius*) are increasing across the US. Infestations are not related to unsanitary living conditions. Bed bugs do not fly or jump. They have no wings and are about ¼ inch in length with a flattened oval shape and rusty brown color. They feed on blood, but they can live for up to 18 months without eating a blood meal. Below are some frequently asked questions about bed bugs:

Q: How do I know if I have bed bugs?

A: Usually the first sign of an infestation is small rusty spots on mattresses and bed linens. Red, itchy welts on the skin may also be an indication of infestation. Bed bugs are usually only active at night, if they are seen during the day; this indicates a very heavy infestation. Bed bugs may also hide behind baseboards, pictures on the wall, curtains, cracks in the walls and behind electrical wall plates.

Q: Do bed bugs carry disease?

A: These insects are not known to spread diseases; however scratching the bites may lead to skin infections.

Q: What do I do if I have a bed bug infestation?

A: Contact a licensed pest control company. Complete elimination of bed bugs is difficult for a homeowner to do without a licensed pest control operator. They can help you determine how bad the infestation is, and have access to chemical treatments that are not available at the store. It often takes multiple treatments and great effort and attention to cleaning to completely get rid of an infestation.

Bed bugs are not killed by freezing temperatures, but they are killed by temperatures above 120° F. Clothing, bed linens, and other items can be washed in hot water and placed on high heat in the dryer for at least 5 minutes. Any items that are thrown away should be wrapped and tightly sealed in plastic to prevent the bed bugs from spreading any further. Carpets, mattresses and box springs should be vacuumed and the contents disposed of in a sealed plastic bag, then cover mattress and box springs with plastic covers. Reduce the amount of clutter in the home to get rid of hiding places for the bed bugs and to make sure that all chemical treatment can reach into areas they may be hiding.

Q: If I live in an apartment complex what do I do if a neighboring apartment has bed bugs?

A: If one apartment is found to have bed bugs, all others on the same floor should be inspected as well. Contact a licensed pest control operator to determine if treatment is necessary. At this time, there is no law that requires the landlord to treat a building if bed bugs are found (unless otherwise stated in a rental agreement).

Knowing what to look for can help find bed bugs early and prevent a large infestation. The Cincinnati City Health Department has information available on bed bugs on their website <http://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/health/pages/-35616-/>. You can contact the Logan County Health District at 937.592.9040 ext. 6206 or at www.loganhealth.org