

Crevices, bed frames, baseboards, boxes under the bed, etc., could also be treated with amorphous silica gel or diatomaceous earth (D.E.) insecticides, which would leave a residual control. D.E. works by abrading and dehydrating crawling insects. These dusts should not be used where children and pets may have contact with the dusted surface.

When pest control professionals are involved, it is important to follow their directions regarding room preparation.

Insects may emerge from concealed areas for several weeks, but will die when they come in contact with the treated surfaces.

In apartments, hotels or motels, bedbugs can spread from one unit to another. Therefore, if they are found in one unit, then adjacent units (on each side, and above and below) should be checked out.

B. Non-Chemical Control

Sticky glue paper (available in hardware or garden stores) can be used to monitor for bedbugs. Place these around walls and bed legs, and wherever bedbug activity is suspected. Carpet tape (double-sided sticky tape) can also be used.

Heat treatment: The thermal death point for the common bedbug (in all stages of development) is about 45°C.

A steam cleaner can be applied to cracks, crevices

Climbing prevention: Prevent bedbugs from moving onto furniture by coating the legs of the furniture with petroleum jelly, or by wrapping the legs with double sided tape.

Vacuum-Cleaning: Carefully use a nozzle attachment to clean all corners, mattress seams, and crevices in upholstered furniture to remove bugs and their eggs. Wrap waste and vacuum cleaner bags and remove them from the building.

General Cleaning: Clean and sanitize dwelling places, launder bedding and clothing, vacuum frequently, and repeat on a regular basis. Cleaned, insect-free clothing and items can be stored in tightly-closed plastic bags for later use.

For more information, please contact your nearest Environmental Public Health office.

Edmonton Main Office

(780) 735-1800

Calgary Main Office

(403) 943-2295

Lethbridge Main Office

(403) 388-6689

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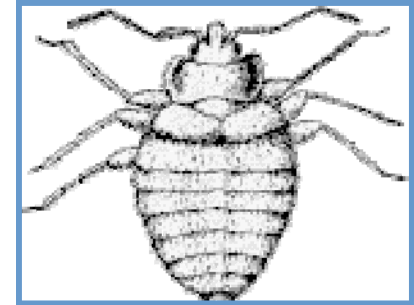
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Bedbugs (*Cimex lectularius*)

DESCRIPTION

Bedbugs are a type of bloodsucking insect found all over the world. They prefer human blood, but will feed off other mammals. They have piercing-sucking mouthparts, which are inserted into the skin of the host and used to withdraw a blood meal. An anticoagulant in the saliva is the cause of an allergic reaction in some people.

These insects feed mainly at night causing small, hard, swollen, white welts on the skin that may become inflamed and itch severely. Unlike the random pattern of bites made by mosquitoes, bedbugs tend to leave orderly rows. An infestation can be recognized by blood stains and dark spots of excreta on sheets and mattresses, bed clothes and walls, as well as a sweet musty raspberry-like odour.

Adult bedbugs are wingless insects and are oval, flat and reddish brown in colour. When unfed, the adult is about 3/16 inch long and 1/8 inch wide (about 5mm by 3mm). After feeding, the body elongates and widens, and the colour changes to dull red. The change in size, shape, and colour is so great that it may cause an observer to believe that two different insect species are present.



Adult Bedbug

LIFE CYCLE AND HABITS

Each female bedbug can lay about 200 eggs. Under ideal conditions (23°C and with regular feeding), in one year, there may be three or more generations. The eggs are laid singly or in clusters coated with a sticky substance adhering to wood, fabric, and other crevices where the bugs hide. Development to the adult stage takes about two months. Bedbugs are extremely hardy; adults can live for a year or longer without food. Both nymphs (newly hatched bedbugs) and adults use blood from humans.

SOURCES OF INFESTATIONS

Bedbugs are found in places where there are people.

The areas favoured by bedbugs include covers and mattresses, particularly along the seams, and later spreading to crevices in the bed frame and box springs.

In severe infestations, the bugs will spread to crevices in baseboards, window and door casings, picture frames, carpet, loosened wallpaper, cracked plaster, in furniture, and ceiling stippled surfaces.

Bedbugs are spread with movement of clothing, used beds and furniture. They can crawl from one room or apartment to another.

Infested items should not be brought into the home. Carefully check luggage and clothing, especially after traveling.

DISEASES

Bedbugs do not, as far as is known, transmit any communicable human diseases.

CONTROL MEASURES

Bedbug control begins with locating hiding places used by the insects. Because of their secretive nature, they are not seen crawling around in the daylight hours where they would be easily identified. They hide in various areas during the day and come out at night to feed.

A. Chemical Control

Before a room is treated chemically, a vacuum cleaner should be used to remove lint and dust from mattresses, covers, box springs, floor corners and other furniture. After cleaning, the vacuum bag should be put in a plastic bag and discarded outside.

Sprays of pyrethrins may be used to treat cracks and crevices where bedbugs could be hiding, including seams of mattresses, bed frames, furniture, electrical boxes, baseboards, carpet edges, and loose wall paper.

The use of liquid sprays is not advisable on a mattress or upholstered furniture unless directed by the product label. Usually pyrethrin-based aerosols are applied to mattresses and furniture, whereas residual spot sprays are applied to floor cracks and crevices.