

# Bed Bugs

## Properly identifying bed bugs:

- Adult bed bugs are flat with rusty-red-colored oval bodies, and are about 3/16" long or the size of an apple seed.
- A newly hatched bed bug is semi-transparent, light tan in color, and the size of a poppy seed.
- Inspect mattress seams, sheets, upholstered furniture, crevices and cracks in furniture, and baseboards of walls for blood stains, droppings and eggs.
- For help in positively identifying bed bugs, contact the ISU Linn County Extension office at 319-377-9839.



Bed bugs at various stages of growth. Unfed bugs (top row) are lighter in color, shorter, and flatter.



(Above left) Bed bug eggs, nymphs and adult. (Center) Bed bug adult shown about 7 times actual length. (Right) Bed bugs are flat when viewed from the side.

## Things you can do to prevent bed bugs:

- Never bring bed frames, mattresses, box springs or upholstered furniture found on the street into your home.
- Check all used or rented furniture for bed bugs.
- Inspect the bed and furniture when traveling. Keep suitcases off the floor and bed, and inspect them before you leave.
- If you suspect you have been around bed bugs, immediately wash and dry your clothing on hot settings or store it in a sealed plastic bag until you can.



(Left) Unlike mosquito bites, bed bug bites often appear in rows. Welts usually appear immediately, but can take up to 14 days to appear.

(Below) Bed bug adult shown actual size.



## Getting rid of bed bugs:

- Bed bug infestations usually require the services of professional exterminators.
- Severe infestations or cluttered apartments may take more visits to eliminate bed bugs.



Apply caulk to seal crevices and joints in baseboards and gaps on shelving or cabinets.



Clutter in sleeping areas gives bed bugs a place to hide.



Cover mattresses and box springs with covers made for allergy or bed bug control.

## What you can do without a professional:

- Get rid of clutter in sleeping areas. Clutter gives bed bugs a place to hide.
- Wash all items in hot water (130°F) and dry on the highest setting for at least 20 minutes. For items that can't be washed, 20 minutes in a HOT clothes dryer will kill bed bugs. Steam heat is also effective against bed bugs and bed bug eggs.
- Enclose infested mattresses and box springs in a cover that is labeled "for bed bugs" for at least a full year. Even if there are bed bugs (eggs, etc) still on the mattress, an effective cover will cause them to starve and die.
- Monitor for bed bugs by placing double-sided tape around the legs of your bed and in other areas. This won't stop all bed bugs.

## About the use of pesticides:

Bed bug infestations usually require the use of pesticides.

- It is not advisable for homeowners or tenants to attempt to treat for bed bugs. Most of the necessary pesticides are only sold for use by professional pest management companies.
- Chemical treatments used for other pests will **NOT** be effective against bed bugs and will only cause unnecessary chemical exposure to the person applying the treatment.

To report or ask about pesticide exposures, call the Poison Control Center 24 hours a day:  
1-800-222-1212  
For more information about pesticide products, call the National Pesticide Information Center at  
1-800-858-7378

To find out if someone is licensed by the State of Iowa to apply pesticides, go to:  
[www.iowaagriculture.gov/pesticides.asp](http://www.iowaagriculture.gov/pesticides.asp)  
(515) 281-5321



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## Additional Resources:

**ALWAYS FOLLOW THE PESTICIDE LABEL!**