

Understanding & Controlling Bed Bugs

Bed bugs are stow-a-ways. They enter homes, apartments, hotels, movie theaters, etc by hiding in cracks of luggage, furniture, clothing, pillows, boxes, and other objects when they are moved between places. Since they feed on blood, they have little to do with the cleanliness of the place, although clutter can provide a hiding place.

Bed Bug Basics: Key Facts to Know

- They can survive for months without feeding and may be present in clean, vacant homes when new tenants unpack.
- Once established, they can spread very quickly from room to room.
- They are not known to carry or spread diseases.
- Bed bugs aren't just in beds—they can hide in chair cushions, sofas, behind electrical outlets, cracks, crevices, and even behind picture frames.
- Most bites are painless but may turn into itchy skin welts; some people may show no symptoms at all. The head and neck are common feeding sites, but arms, hands and legs can also be bitten. Even with 2 people in the same bed, one may show symptoms and the other may not.
- Control methods can take hours to days depending on the severity of the infestation.
- Bed bugs are flat, brown, wingless insects about 1/4 to 3/8 inches long. They range from clear to brown to purplish red and they also cast skin so you may find empty shells.
- If they are not eliminated, a new infestation can occur. After feeding they can move away from the feeding site to areas such as smoke detectors or fire sprinklers.
- Bed bugs can survive temperatures from near freezing to almost 113°F.
- Bed Bugs are common. There has been a resurgence in their population. Though the exact cause is not known, experts think that it is due to the increased resistance to available pesticides, greater domestic and international travel, and lack of knowledge regarding bed bugs.
- Thorough inspection is essential.

Bed Bug Concerns: What to Do

If you suspect you have bed bugs or have seen bugs and are unsure if they are bed bugs, contact the Johnson County Extension Office at 913-715-7000 for assistance in identification.

For Renters:

- Contact your landlord about the issue.
- If your landlord is unwilling or unable to assist with elimination, reach out to your city's code enforcement office for help.

For Complaints Involving Motels, Hotels, or Movie Theaters:

Contact the Kansas Department of Health and Environment at www.kdheks.gov or call 785-296-5600.

There is a lot of misleading information on the internet. Here are some credible websites for reliable information on identification, inspection, and treatment:

- www.cdc.gov
- <http://npic.orst.edu>
- www.epa.gov
- <https://extension.umn.edu/>
- <http://www.hickc.org/services.htm>

