

BEDBUGS



This guide will provide information about the identification of bedbugs and their habits, methods to prevent the spreading of the problem, and proper procedures to have the problem solved as quickly as possible.

The problem of bedbugs is a worldwide problem and will continue to be a problem for some time to come. They are primarily a problem for the hospitality industry, such as hotels, motels, guest houses, cruise ships, and resorts. The bedbugs will be picked up in an infested area and be carried back to a residence in clothing and luggage.

Bedbugs are not as small as most people would believe. They are easily visible in their adult form. They are approximately the size of a pencil eraser, red to brown in color, flat and oval in shape.



The nymph stage (infant) of the insect is considerably smaller than the adult. It is approximately the size of a pencil point. The female bedbug will lay 3 to 5 eggs a day and those eggs hatch in 2 to 3 days. It takes approximately 1 month for the life cycle to go from egg to adult, under ideal conditions. The nymph will molt (shed its outer skin) 5 times in that month. Each time the nymph is preparing to molt, it requires a blood meal. It utilizes the protein in the blood to grow a new skin. It will normally take about 3 to 5 months for the infestation to become severe enough to become a major problem. Until the number of bites reaches a significant level most individuals do not become aware of a problem.



An indication that there may be a bedbug infestation is always the small blood spots that will be found on the bedding. The bedbug is unable to digest all of its blood meal and therefore excretes a portion of the undigested blood on the areas where it crawls. Another event that occurs is that as they are feeding the individual will move around in the bed and squeeze the bedbug between their body and the bedding. This will leave a small blood spot. Inspection of the sheets and mattress cover will in many instances verify the presence or absence of bedbugs.

Identifying the bite of a bedbug is difficult task and many times cannot be distinguished from that of a mosquito or other small insect. The site of the bite will become a welt and itch intensely. The itching and welt is caused from the reaction of the body to the saliva from the bedbug's mouth parts. Each individual's reaction to the bite will be in proportion to the antibodies that they have in their blood system. Just as no two individuals react to mosquito bites in the same manner, they will not react to bedbug bites in the same manner. Some reactions will be quite severe and others will only have a mild or no reaction. The best method of determining if the welts and itching is from bedbugs is to ask a lot of questions about the resident's recent activities and perform an inspection of the room. There are a large number of causes for itching and welts. Some of these causes may be allergic reactions, stress related medical issues, other outdoor insects (chiggers, fleas, mosquitoes), and some socially transmitted diseases.



Receiving immediate help with this type problem will keep the problem from becoming a major problem involving more than one residence. As soon as a problem is suspected, you should call a professional pest control services that well trained and highly skilled at finding and treating bedbug problems.

In order to prevent the spreading of the problem to other areas or residences there are procedures that must be observed. Do not remove any bedding or other items to another room in an effort to relieve yourself of the problem. This may very well cause the spread of the problem to another area. Do not share clothing or other items that have been in the room with others. Until the problem is identified and solved all precautions should be taken to insure that the problem remains isolated so it may be adequately treated and solved. Another issue is to remain calm and do not panic. It normally takes months for a severe infestation to spread to other rooms within the same general area. The probability that it has spread is very minimal. The pest control technicians will be able to evaluate the situation and determine if there is indication that additional inspection and/or treatment is necessary.