

CALIFORNIA AMERICAN

EXTERMINATOR

## BED BUG INFORMATIONAL BROCHURE



### about bed bugs

Most of us have heard the nursery rhyme 'don't let the bed bugs bite, but never knew they were real until now. Many households of this generation have never seen a bed bug. And, until recently, they also were a rarity among pest control professionals. They are increasingly being encountered in homes, apartments, hotels, motels, dormitories, shelters and modes of transportation. The bugs are efficient hitchhikers and are usually transported in on luggage, clothing, beds, furniture, etc. Once bedbugs are introduced, they often spread room to room throughout a unit and prove to be a very difficult pest.

### about bed bug behavior

Bed bugs are small, brownish, flattened insects that feed solely on blood. Adult bed bugs are about 1/4 inch long and reddish brown, with oval, flattened bodies. The immature nymphs resemble the adults, but are smaller. Bed bugs do not fly, but can move quickly over floors, walls, ceilings and other surfaces. Female bed bugs lay their eggs in secluded areas, depositing up to 5 a day and 500 during a lifetime. The eggs are tiny, whitish, (individual eggs are about the size of a dust spec). Newly hatched nymphs are no bigger than a pinhead. As they grow, they molt (shed their skin) 5 times before reaching maturity. A blood meal is needed between each successive molt. Under favorable conditions (70-90' F), the bugs can complete development in as little as a month, producing 3 or more generations per year.



Adults are just under a 1/4" long and are relatively flat, nearly as wide as long, and oval in shape compared to most other insects.

Bed bugs are very resilient. Nymphs can survive months without feeding and the adults for more than a year. Infestations are unlikely to lessen by leaving the premises unoccupied. Bed bugs are active mainly at night. During the daytime, they prefer to hide close to where people sleep. Their flattened bodies enable them to fit into tiny crevices. Bed bugs do not have nests like ants or bees, but do tend to congregate in habitual hiding places.

These areas are marked by dark spotting and staining, which is the dried excrement of the bugs. Also present will be eggs and eggshells, molted skins of maturing nymphs and the bugs themselves. Another likely sign of bed bugs is rusty or reddish spots of blood on bed sheets or mattresses. Heavy infestations are sometimes accompanied by a "buggy" or sweetish odor. Initial infestations tend to be around beds, but the bugs eventually may become scattered throughout a room, occupying any crevice of protected location. They also can spread to adjacent rooms or apartments.

### about bed bugs bites

Bed bugs usually bite people at night while they are sleeping. They feed by piercing the skin with an elongated beak through which they withdraw blood, yet the person seldom knows they are being bitten. Symptoms thereafter vary with the individual. Some people develop an itchy welt or localized swelling, while others have little or no reaction. Unlike flea bites that occur mainly around the ankles, bed bugs feed on any bare skin exposed while sleeping (face, neck, body, shoulders, arms, hands, etc.). The welts and itching are often attributed to other causes such as a mosquito. For these reasons, infestations may go a long time unnoticed and can become quite large before being detected. It is important to recognize that not all bites or bite-like reactions are due to bed bugs. Confirmation requires finding and identifying the bugs, themselves.

## about bed bug hiding spots

Bed bugs can live in almost any crevice or protected location. The most common place to find them is the bed. Bed bugs often hide within seams, tufts, and crevices of the mattress, box spring, bed frame and headboard. A thorough inspection requires dismantling the bed and standing the components on edge. Things to look for are the bugs themselves and the light-brown, molted skins of the nymphs. Dark spots of dried bed bug excrement are often present along mattress seams or wherever the bugs have resided. Cracks and crevices of bed frames should be examined. Headboards secured to walls should also be removed and inspected. Bed bugs also hide among items stored under beds. Many areas besides beds, however, can harbor bed bugs. Nightstands and dressers should be emptied and examined inside and out, then tipped over and inspected beneath. Often times the bugs will be hiding in cracks, corners and recesses. Upholstered chairs and sofas should be checked, especially seams, tufts, skirts and crevices beneath cushions. Sofas can be a major bed bug hotspot when used for sleeping. Other common places to find bed bugs include: along and under the edge of wall-to-wall carpeting (especially behind beds and furniture); cracks in wood molding; picture frames, switch plates and outlets under loose wallpaper; in clothing stored in closets; and inside clocks, phones, televisions and smoke detectors. The challenge is to find and treat all places where bugs and eggs may be present. Bed bugs tend to congregate in certain areas, but it is common to find an individual or some eggs scattered here and there.

## about treatment

It often takes hours to properly inspect and treat a bed bug infestation and follow-up visits are usually required. As mentioned earlier, owners and occupants have important pre-treatment responsibilities. Reducing clutter is a necessity. Belongings strewn about rooms give the insects many places for bed bugs to hide and hinder inspection and treatment. Infested bedding and garments will need to be bagged and laundered (at 120° F) or discarded since these items cannot be treated with insecticides. Vacuuming can be very useful for removing bugs and eggs from mattresses, carpet, walls and other surfaces. Pay particular attention to seams, tufts and edges of mattresses and box springs and the perimeter edge of wall-to-wall carpets. Afterward, dispose of the vacuum contents in a sealed trash bag. While vacuuming can be helpful, insecticides are important for bed bug elimination.

## about mattress treatment

Eliminating bed bugs from mattresses and box springs is challenging. If there are holes or tears in the fabric, the bugs and eggs may be inside. There also are restrictions on how beds can be treated with pesticides. For these reasons, it is often recommended that infested beds be discarded. However, we recommend purchase of mattress and box spring encasements. These encasements are crucial in preventing further infestation; preventing bed bugs from entering or escaping, because bed bugs are unable to penetrate encasements. We offer these encasements at our rate.

Bed bugs are not a pest that can be controlled with do-it-yourself measures. California American Exterminator has an effective treatment program to control bed bugs. We offer both conventional treatments and heat remediation. Residents are a key component to the control of bed bug infestations. Control can only be achieved when we all work together!



Information adapted from Michael F. Potter  
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## questions

Feel free to call our office to discuss treatment options and identify the bed bug issue your property is facing.



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## join the conversation



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