

## Could Bed Bugs Invade My Home?

Bed bugs are increasingly showing up in homes, apartments, hotels, dormitories, shelters, and vehicles throughout the U.S. They hitch rides in luggage, boxes, shoes, and other mobile objects. Bed bug findings are in no way tied to unsanitary living areas. You may have no idea they are present because they normally feed when you are sleeping.

## How Can I Identify A Bed Bug?



- ☒ Bed bugs are flat, oval-shaped and very small in size.
- ☒ Bed bug hatchlings have been compared in size to poppy seeds.
- ☒ Adults can grow to 1/4 of an inch long.
- ☒ Bed bugs have 6 slender legs along with medium-long antennae at the top of their head.
- ☒ Bed bugs do not have any wings.

## What Are the Signs That Bed Bugs Are Present?

They often hide unnoticed in dark crevices, and eggs can be nestled in fabric seams. Signs of bed bugs include fecal spots, blood smears on sheets, and the bed bug sheds of

skin. They usually remain close to hosts, commonly in or near beds, couches, or where people sleep. Bed bugs hide in:

- ☒ Mattress crevices
- ☒ Furniture crevices
- ☒ Wood trim
- ☒ Electrical outlets and devices
- ☒ Behind picture frames
- ☒ Bed Frames
- ☒ Bed bug bites usually result in red, itchy bumps.

Some people, however, are not allergic to the bites and may not react.



## How Do I Get Rid of Bed Bugs?

Bed bugs can be difficult to eliminate. That is why do-it-yourself measures DO NOT work and most often make the problem worse. The first step should be to contact your landlord and a pest professional. They will have the ability to identify and locate the bed bugs and treat them accordingly. Follow-up treatments may be necessary. Treatment can come in a variety of forms, including:

- ☒ Heat
- ☒ Insecticides

For more information, see the Integrated Pest Management and Treatment sections of the Polk County Manual for Prevention and Control of Bed Bugs. [www.polkcountyiowa.gov/health](http://www.polkcountyiowa.gov/health) and click on "Bed Bug Information."

## Prevention and Early Detection?

As always, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and this is especially true with bed bugs. To prevent bed bugs, we recommend using the acronym - S.L.E.E.P.

- ☒ Survey the area for signs of bed bug infestations, such as red or dark brown spots on bed sheets.
- ☒ Lift the mattress, and other furniture items to look for bed bug hiding places.
- ☒ Elevate all luggage and personal items. Use racks to keep these items away from carpets and beds or place items in the bathtub.
- ☒ Examine all luggage and personal items before returning home to prevent bed bug migration.
- ☒ Professional extermination services are recommended.

Also, BE EXTREMELY CAREFUL when buying used home items and if purchasing from Rent-to-Own stores- before bringing these items home inspect each item thoroughly. See the Inspection Section of the Polk County Manual for Prevention and Control of Bed Bugs.

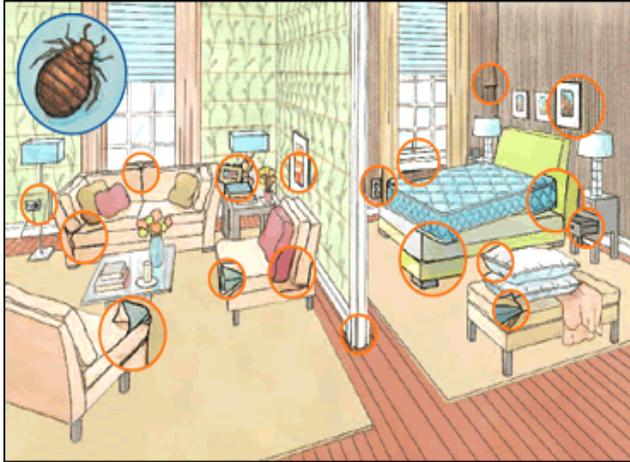
**DO NOT take bedding or furniture that has been left on the curb for disposal.**

## Tenants



You need to **contact your landlord** within 24 hours or the next business day if you believe that you have a problem with bed bugs. By allowing the landlord to take extermination measures quickly, you are less likely to infest surrounding units and it will be much easier to get rid of them.

**Places to look for bed bugs**



**Bed Bug Bites**



**Mattress and Headboard**



Polk County Health Department  
1907 Carpenter Avenue  
Des Moines, IA 50314  
515-286-3798



# BED BUGS

