

# THE FACTS ABOUT BED BUGS

## WHAT ARE BED BUGS?

Bed bugs are small wingless insects that feed on the blood of warm-blooded mammals, specifically humans. Bed bugs are typically nocturnal, so they generally come out at night to feed. They are not associated with dirty living conditions, yet, are more likely found in areas where people move frequently, such as apartments, hotels, dorms, etc.

Bed bugs are on the rise across the U.S., but in Ohio the problem runs rampant (see right). It is important to remember, any of us may fall victim to a bed bug infestation. Educating yourself about bed bugs and implementing a few preventive measures into your daily life, is the best defense in preventing an infestation in your own home.



### Worst Bed Bug Cities in the U.S. 2013

1. Chicago, Illinois
2. Los Angeles, California
3. **Columbus, Ohio**
4. Detroit, Michigan
5. **Cincinnati, Ohio**
6. **Cleveland/Akron/Canton, Ohio**
7. **Dayton, Ohio**
8. Washington, DC
9. Denver, Colorado
10. Indianapolis, Indiana

Source: Terminix

## DID YOU KNOW?

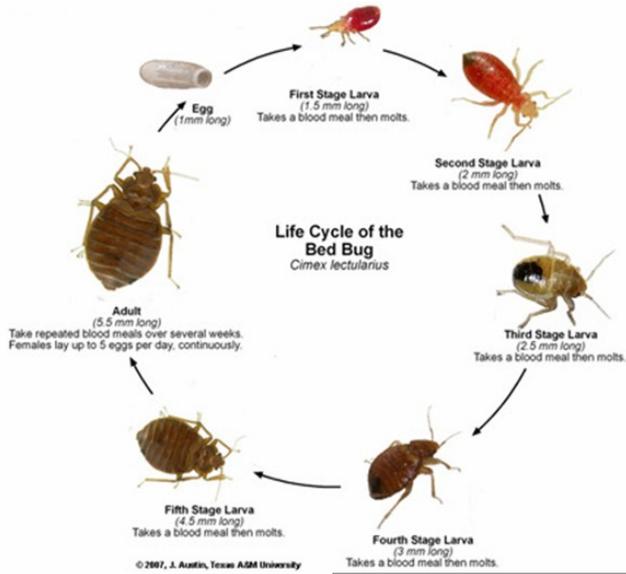
There are many myths associated with bed bugs. Here are a few truths:

- A single pregnant female bed bug can start an infestation.
- Bed bugs crawl, but do NOT fly or jump.
- One female bed bug can lay over 500 eggs per lifetime.
- A bed bug's lifespan is 12-18 months.
- They feed on blood, but can survive for over a year without a blood meal.
- Bed bugs are not known to transmit any diseases.
- Newly hatched bed bugs are the size of a poppy seed and grow to the size of an apple seed.
- They are great hitchhikers, moving from place to place on an individual's belongings.
- People don't have bed bugs but their belongings do!
- Anyone is susceptible to a bed bug infestation, even you!

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## LIFE CYCLE OF A BED BUG



The female bed bug has the ability to lay 1-12 eggs per day. She will “glue” the egg into a crack or crevice. It takes 1-2 weeks for the eggs to hatch. Once first born a bed bug is the size of a poppy seed and opaque in color until their exoskeleton hardens to be a deep red-brown.

The bug goes through five molts of their exoskeleton before reaching maturity. The bed bug must have a

blood meal at each stage. They will shed their old exoskeleton each stage before growing. Full maturity may take a few months.

The adult bed bug will be the size of an apple seed. The typical lifespan lasts 12-18 months. The bug may even go into a dormant period while a food source is scarce.

One pregnant female has the potential of creating an infestation of over 13,000 bugs in just six months!

## HOW ARE THEY TRANSPORTED?

“MANY PEOPLE SUSPECT USED ITEMS AS A SOURCE OF BED BUGS, BUT **NEW** ITEMS?”

For the most part humans do a fantastic job moving bed bugs from location to location. They hide in our purses, backpacks, coats, etc. and as we visit others they crawl out to begin a new infestation in someone else’s home.

Another way we bring bed bugs into our homes is through second-hand

clothing, furniture or household items. Be cautious when purchasing these items.

We all love a great deal, but be suspect of large items on the curb out with the trash. Most people don't throw away all of their belongings at once, unless infested.

Many people suspect used items as a source of bed bugs, but new items?

Unfortunately, we do have to be cautious with these new items too!

Lastly, we see bed bugs move from one apartment or condo to another. Bed bugs can crawl along electrical wiring, plumbing, etc.. If the apartment next to you has a problem you may too in the near future!

## WHERE DO THEY HIDE?



The above picture shows live bugs and black fecal staining within a mattress seam.

Bed bugs love to be hidden in cracks and crevices typically near their food source, YOU! So begin your search in the rooms people sleep, bedrooms, living room, den, etc. Use a magnifying glass to look for live bugs, shed exoskeletons and small fecal spotting (dark colored staining) in the following areas:

- Around the mattress, particularly the seam
- Box spring
- Bed frame
- Behind the headboard
- Bedding
- Behind molding
- Under carpet
- Nightstand
- Dressers
- Upholstered furniture
- Under electrical plates
- Couches
- Behind wall hangings
- In lighting fixtures
- Drapes/curtains

## PREVENTION

Of course you can never eliminate your risk of bed bugs 100%, but you can greatly reduce your chance of bringing them into your home by following these prevention tips.

Examine all new and second hand purchases before they are brought into your home. All washable items may be run in the hot cycle of your washing machine or placed in a hot dryer. Bed bugs die immediately when exposed to

temperatures of 120°F. Household items may be wiped down with rubbing alcohol to kill bugs/eggs. Then throw away all packing material as soon as possible.

When travelling look around the bed for signs of bed bugs. Keep your belongings in your luggage on a luggage rack, hung in the closet or in the bathroom. Avoid placing belongings on the bed or in the dresser. Upon return wash all items in hot water

and run through the dryer.

Never bring back packs, purses or luggage into your bed rooms. Keep these items in a garage, basement or near the front of your home. You may have picked up a visitor and the last thing you want is to bring them directly into the area where you sleep.

A few simple lifestyle changes may save your home from a massive infestation!

“BED BUGS DIE IMMEDIATELY WHEN EXPOSED TO TEMPERATURES OF 120°F”

## ARE BED BUGS A HEALTH CONCERN?

Bed bugs are NOT known to transmit disease. Although some people may have an allergic reaction to their bites.

The bite itself is so small that it may not leave a visible mark. When the bed bug goes to feed they inject a substance into the victim. The bugs inject an anticoagulant so the blood will flow freely.

Approximately half the population has a reaction to the anticoagulant which may result in a rash. The rash may be very itchy and cause people to scratch. Anytime there is a break in the skin a person is susceptible to a secondary infection. Wash the bites with warm soapy water and treat with an anti-itch cream.

It is very possible for some family members to develop a rash and not others in the same family. Also, the rash may develop days after the initial bite. Waiting for visible bites marks to indicate a problem would not be recommended. Routinely, check around your sleeping area for signs of bed bugs .



An allergic reaction to bed bug bites.

## TREATMENT OPTIONS

Professional treatment may be more expensive than over-the-counter treatment options, but they will be more effective.

Professional “crack and crevice” chemical treatment is the most common of the treatment options. The homeowner or tenant will have to reduce the clutter in the home and clean clothing as

directed by the Pest Control Company for effective treatment. Chemical treatment may take several applications.

Heat treatment has a near 100% kill rate, if done properly. Your home and it’s belongings are safely heat treated to well above the kill temperature of a bed bug and sustained for several hours.

This type of treatment should be left to the professionals.

Many homeowners want to do treatments themselves, in most situations it is not advised. Please do not set off bug bugs, which cause the bugs to scatter and worsen your situation. The chemicals you can purchase without a license are not very effective on this elusive insect.



Computers are used to control the temperature during whole house heat treatments.



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

## STARK COUNTY BED BUG PREVENTION TASK FORCE

Stark County Health Department  
330-493-9904  
starkhealth.org

Alliance City Health Department  
330-821-7373  
cityofalliance.com/health

Massillon City Health Department  
330-830-1710  
massillonohio.com/health

Canton City Health Department  
330-489-3231  
cantonhealth.org

## THE STARK COUNTY BED BUG TASK FORCE

The Task Force was created in 2010 to educate the community on bed bug prevention and treatment options, in order to control the bed bug situation. The Task Force consists of 18 organizations throughout Stark County such as health departments, school administration, homeless shelters, transportation and pest control companies. Over the past three years the Task Force has focused on community outreach and education through trainings and presentations, as well as, assisting community businesses and organizations create bed bug protocols. Over thirty community businesses and organizations have been trained, reaching approximately 1,800 individuals.

The Task Force meets bi-annually, on the third Thursday of April and October. If you are interested attending a Task Force meeting or receiving a training for your staff please contact, Courtney Myers at [myersc@starkhealth.org](mailto:myersc@starkhealth.org) or Kelly Potkay at [potkayk@starkhealth.org](mailto:potkayk@starkhealth.org) for more information.

## LANDLORD VS. TENANT?

Whether you are a landlord or a tenant you may be forced to deal with a bed bug situation. Open communication between the two parties is the best strategy, so if you suspect a problem please inform the

other party as soon as possible.

Unless specifically stated in your lease agreement the responsible party for payment of a treatment is a gray area. It is best to work together to get the situation

under control.

Landlords must remember that bed bugs can live over a year in a dormant state, so even if your current tenants leave, you will still stuck with an infestation. Many times working alongside

the current tenant may be the best strategy.

The tenant does have responsibility in preparing the home for treatment and may be expected to follow the Pest Control Company's protocol.

## HOW TO CHOOSE A PEST CONTROL COMPANY?

Trying to find a professional to treat for bed bugs can be an overwhelming task. Knowing what questions to ask will help you make an informed decision.

First, most companies will perform a free inspection to identify the insect properly and determine the extent of the infestation. Be leery of a

company that will quote rates over the phone without seeing your situation first.

Many companies can provide chemical treatment, heat treatment or a combination of both. Ask about which would be most effect for your home.

If you decide to use chemical treatment, ask about a guarantee. Since repeat

applications is typically needed, find out how many visits will be covered under the agreement and will a follow-up inspection be done. Then make sure they are currently licensed through the Department of Agriculture, [www.agri.ohio.gov/](http://www.agri.ohio.gov/).

Lastly, speak to the technician about your responsibilities

prior and following treatment. Protocols have been developed to make sure treatment will be most effective. Make sure you are capable of doing the necessary cleaning. If not, you may consider hiring an independent company to assist you.

Watch our bed bug videos on YouTube [www.youtube.com/user/StarkHealth](http://www.youtube.com/user/StarkHealth)