

Fact Sheet #8 – Bedbugs

*Cimex lectularius*

Description

Very small parasitic insects, 6-9mm long that typically likes to feed just before dawn. Their bite is extremely irritating. Active all year.

Habitat

Bedbugs spend most of their time hiding in bed linen and only leave for a short time to seek a meal of blood, typically from humans. Bedbugs can live several months without a meal. House cleanliness assists with control but infestations can occur due to transference from furniture and luggage that has been in contact with an infestation.

Biology

Up to 10 eggs are laid in batches by the adult bugs, in cracks and crevices near the source of food. Within 30 days the eggs hatch, producing nymphs which seek blood meals. A typical life-cycle when conditions are suitable may be as little as 45 days. They have piercing sucking mouth parts.

What you can do to limit infestation:

- Remove all bedding and wash in hot, soapy water on the same day as the treatment service.
- Treat the mattress with a portable steam-cleaner or "hot-air gun" – pay particular attention to seams, labels, handles, holes (for handles) or tears, and box springs.
- Move the mattress outdoors, wrap it in black plastic sheeting and thoroughly tape the joints – leave it in the sun (remember to turn it over so that both sides get hot) – bedbugs will die fairly quickly in temperatures exceeding 100°F (38°C).
- Place a thin smear of petroleum jelly to the bed legs, or alternatively fit each leg with a band of double-sided adhesive tape to prevent bedbugs from climbing up.
- Remove false bed-heads that are fixed to the wall – if this cannot be achieved, thoroughly seal all around the bed-head so that no gaps remain.
- Seal any gaps to skirting boards, architraves, etc – remove covers from light and power switches within 3m of the bed. Maintain as indicated below.
- Check any electrical appliances within 3m of the bed (lamps, alarm clocks, radios, telephones, etc.) Examine mirrors or pictures within 3m of the bed.
- Ongoing Maintenance: Thoroughly vacuum all areas discussed above and steam clean where safe to do so.







If you get an infestation:

Put your mind at rest, call 13 PEST (13 7378)

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