

# What is a bed bug?

Bed bugs are small flat insects that feed on the blood of sleeping people and animals. Bed bugs are white to reddish-brown in color, wingless, and range from the size of a poppy seed, usually right after hatching, to one-fourth of an inch in length as an adult.

Bed bugs are not known to transmit diseases, however, they do feed off of human blood. Although bed bugs cannot fly and do not jump, they are excellent hitch hikers. They can travel up to 100 feet but usually live within eight feet of where people sleep.

They can survive and remain active in temperatures as low as 46°F, but die when their body temperature reaches 113°F.

## Where do they hide?

Bed bugs can squeeze into any small hiding spot the width of a credit card.

- Around the bed you might find them near the piping, around seams and tags of the mattress and box spring, and in the cracks on the bed frame and headboard.
- In the seams of chairs and couches, between cushions, in the folds of curtains.
- In drawer joints.
- Under loose wall paper and wall hangings.

- Eggs and eggshells around the bedding, or home. These are the outer shells the nymphs shed as they grow larger.

- Black or rusty spots on bed sheets, mattresses or furniture. These black spots are caused by the bug's blood filled fecal matter, or the crushed bug itself.

- Live bed bugs.

## How do I eradicate a bed bug infestation?

You can eliminate a bed bug infestation by using integrated pest management, which includes measures to take at home and through the use of licensed exterminator.

- Vacuum the floors and the baseboards. Empty the bag after each use. Seal the bag and throw it out in an outdoor trash receptacle.

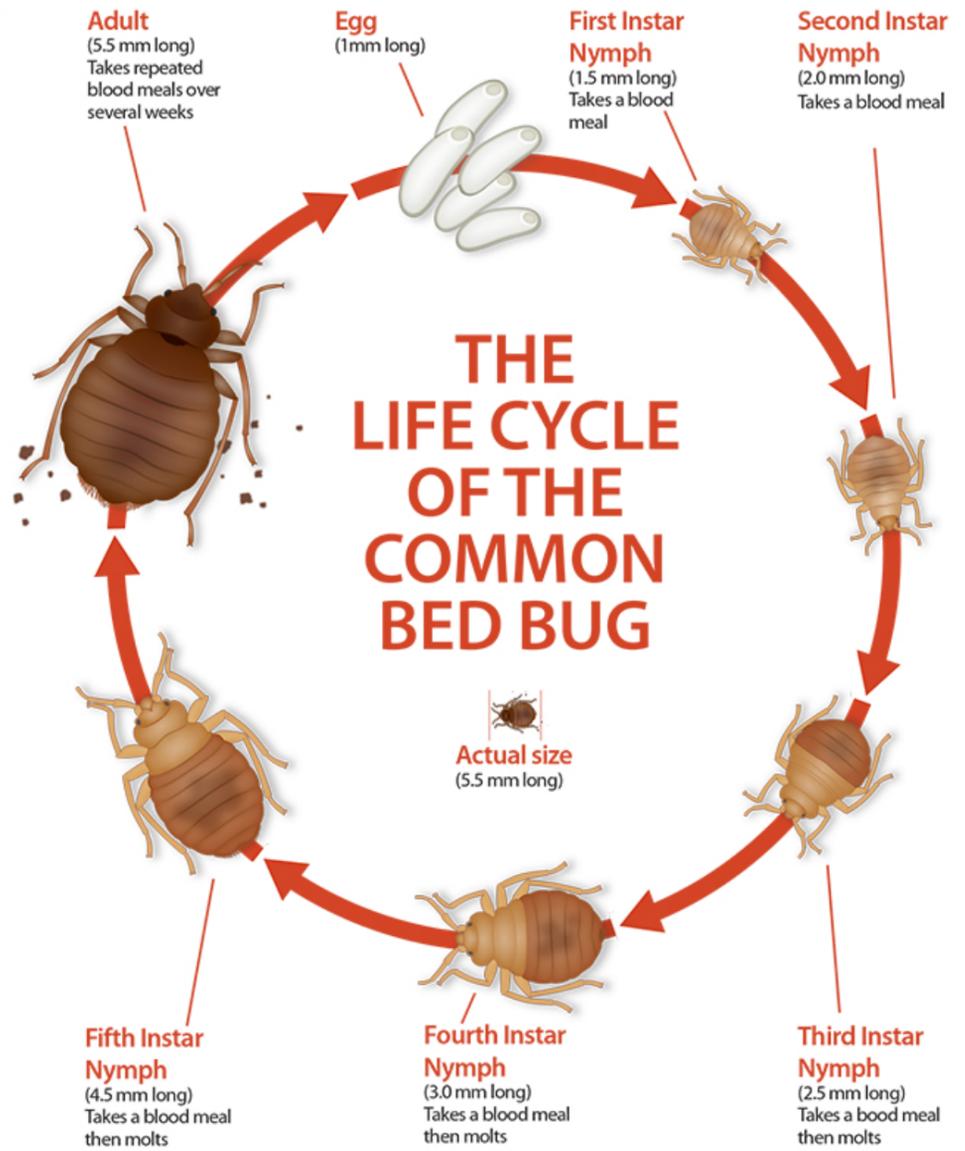
## Signs of infestation

- Bite marks on the face, neck, arms, hands and nearly every other body part. Bites may take as long as 14 days to develop in some people. These bites can look like any other insect bite, a rash, or even hives.

- Wash and dry bedding and clothing at temperatures of at least 120°F for a minimum of 20 minutes to kill bed bugs.
- Wrap any items that cannot get washer and dried in plastic bags and place them outdoors in a hot, sunny location or in a closed vehicle for 1 to 2 days.
- Keep a log of when and where you found the pests. This will help you determine if you've eliminated every single one.

## How can I prevent a bed bug infestation?

- Check secondhand furniture, beds, and couches for any signs of bed bug infestation.
- Use protective cover that encases box springs and mattresses.
- Eliminate clutter in your home.
- When traveling, use luggage racks to hold your luggage when packing or unpacking.
- Check the mattress and headboard before sleeping.
- When returning home from travel, unpack into a washing machine and inspect your luggage carefully.



## Learn more

**For general information on bed bugs** contact the Pima County Health Department's Epidemiology Office at 520-724-7797.

**To file an apartment bed bug complaint** contact the Pima County Health Department's Vector Program at 520-724-7908.

**For help with bed bug identification** contact the University of Arizona Department of Entomology at 520- 621-5925.

**For additional bed bug information** visit the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency website at [www.epa.gov/bedbugs](http://www.epa.gov/bedbugs).



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ATTACK BEFORE THEY ATTACK YOU!