



Bed Bugs

Where are Bed Bugs

Bed bugs are present in Wisconsin and can be found in private homes, hotels, resorts, apartment complexes, and communal living facilities. Any place humans live can become infested with bed bugs.



Bed Bugs Look Like

Bed bugs are small, oval-shaped, and their flat bodies are about the size of an apple seed. They are usually brownish in color, but after feeding their bodies can appear redder and swell slightly.

Spread of Bed Bugs

Introduction is made by bringing infested items into a new, previously clean area. Bed bugs can travel on luggage, used furniture, clothing or other belongings. Most often found in areas where people live and sleep, usually within 8-10 feet of a bed. They are experts at hiding and staying out of sight. The cracks and crevices of headboards, mattresses, box springs and nightstands serve as hiding places for bed bugs.

Health Concerns Associated with Bed Bug Bites

Most people will have a small, itchy, red welt that appears one to several days after the initial bite. This looks similar to a mosquito bite (See images to the right). Severe allergic reactions are rare but can occur.

Secondary infections may occur from scratching the bite and may need medical attention, but bed bugs are not known to transmit diseases.



Bed Bug Infestation

The most common sign of a bed bug infestation is noticing bed bug bite marks on your body. You can also find live bed bugs on your sheets and/or mattress, especially in the folds around the seams of the mattress. Other signs include shed skins, fecal bloodstains or dark colored spots left on bedding, and possibly eggs.

Bed Bug Treatments

A professional pest control company is recommended to control an infestation. Professional pest control companies use a combination of treatment techniques to control and remove the insects.



Professional Treatment Techniques

- Heat Treatment: A room and its contents will be heated to greater than 120°F using specifically designed and approved devices.
- Chemical Treatment: Companies will apply approved chemicals according to the manufacturer's instructions specifically labeled for indoor use and designed to kill bed bugs in cracks and crevices where bed bugs hide.
- Steam Treatment: Mattresses, box springs and furniture can be treated with a steam-producing device. The high temperatures will kill the bed bugs.
- Vacuuming: A vacuum is used to physically remove insects from infested areas.

Treatment Techniques to Avoid

- DO NOT misuse treatment chemicals. Direct application of chemicals to the skin and excessive chemical applications to mattresses and other bedding can cause burns and serious chemical poisoning. Always follow manufacturer instructions when using pest control products.
- DO NOT apply chemicals labeled "For Outdoor Use Only" inside your home.
- DO NOT apply chemicals that are not labeled and approved for use on bed bugs.
- DO NOT use unvented fuel burning appliances such as propane or kerosene heaters inside to heat rooms.

Protection While Traveling

- Ask what actions a hotel is taking to prevent bed bug infestations. Assure they have a plan to deal with infestations and monitor rooms.
- Check the mattress, box spring, headboard and other furniture within 8 to 10 feet of the bed for insects, shed skins and fecal bloodstains.
- When you first walk into a hotel room, store your luggage and belongings in the bathroom or bathtub until you have found no evidence of infestation in your room.
- Carefully inspect your luggage and belongings for insects or their eggs prior to returning home.
- Place your clothing in a dryer on the hottest setting (Above 120°F) for at least 20 minutes after returning home.

Who to Contact

- Hotels: Inform the hotel manager or housekeeping of the infestation and contact the local public health department if you wish to file a complaint.
- Apartments: Inform your apartment manager and contact the local public health department if you wish to file a complaint.
- Homes: Contact a professional pest control company.