

# BED BUGS

## A FACTSHEET

Bed bugs are making a comeback, big-time, and can be found just about anywhere—from warming shelters to four-star hotel rooms. No one really knows why they have returned, but these little bugs are determined to stick around. Although bed bugs are tiny, they can cause major headaches because they're so difficult to find. Use the tips below to help control this stubborn pest.

### BIOLOGY

Understanding how bed bugs eat and live can help you get rid of them.



- Adult bed bugs are flat, small (less than  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch long), oval-shaped, wingless, and reddish brown. Immature bugs are smaller and amber colored. Eggs are tiny and white.
- They feed on blood and attach themselves to their favorite meal: humans and animals. Bed bugs need blood to grow and can live **up to one year on a single feeding**.
- Bed bugs usually bite at night, while we are sleeping.
- Bed bugs move around by hitching rides on clothing, furniture, bedding, and baggage. Bed bugs will live in any crack or crevice in or around your sleeping areas.

### HEALTH ISSUES

- Not known disease carriers.
- Bites can cause an allergic reaction with swelling, redness, and itching.
- Skin infection and scarring can result from scratching.
- The majority of people do not react to bed bug bites.
- Lack of sleep is a serious side-effect causing reduced alertness, loss of productivity, and mood problems.

### PREVENTION

Bed bugs are hard to prevent because of their small size, night habits, and ability to hitchhike. Here are some tips to get you started:

- **Be on the look out** for signs of infestations such as: waking up with bites; seeing live bugs; or dark red or black spots on bedding, carpets, walls and furniture. Finding bed bugs early is the key to preventing their spread.
- **Paint and caulk around sleeping areas** – such as along baseboards, windows and bed frames – to seal hiding spots.
- **Inspect used furniture closely** before bringing into your home. Look for signs of infestations in cushions, zippers, seams, and underneath including springs and frames. Use a magnifying glass if possible. Beware of items in alleys and dumpsters.
- **Take a look around mattresses and furniture** when staying in an unfamiliar place. Bed bugs can hitch a ride home on your clothing or luggage.

