

# BED BUGS

City of Phoenix Housing Department

## BED BUGS BITE

THE PERFECT PARASITE

Bed bugs are flat, brown or rusty-red colored insects. Like fleas, ticks, head lice and mosquitoes, bed bugs feed on blood. Similar to mosquitoes, bed bug abdomens swell and become brighter red as they feed.

### **Bed bugs can survive for over a year without feeding!**

Unlike fleas, ticks and mosquitoes, bed bugs are not known to transmit disease causing pathogens.

Bites are often initially painless but may trigger reactions in some individuals. Although bed bugs are most often found in locations where humans sleep, they are expert hitch-hikers, and may be inadvertently transported in clothing, back-packs, vacuums, wheelchairs, luggage, and pretty much anything people move around.



Bed bugs are a little larger than an apple seed.

Bed bugs are most active at night, often sheltering during the day within twenty feet of beds. Bed bug eggs, immature stages and adults can all be found together in bed frames, the seams of mattresses, box springs, under and behind other furnishings. They like cracks and crevices of all kinds, and may be found behind headboards of beds, pictures and baseboards at the base of walls.

Bed bugs typically arrive in homes as stowaways on belongings.

**Don't Panic! All bed bug infestations can be remediated successfully when the appropriate management steps are followed.**

Here are ways to minimize the chances of bed bugs arriving in homes in the first place:

- Do not collect used furniture, especially mattresses or box springs.
- Do not buy used clothing.
- Inspect rented furniture carefully before accepting it into your home.
- When travelling, check motel/hotel rooms before unpacking or sleeping (at a minimum check the mattress, box spring, and behind the headboard for any signs of bed bug activity).
- De-clutter, an uncluttered home is much easier to monitor and remediate.
- Know what is happening in your building. Bed bugs can move between homes in multifamily buildings. Delay visiting neighbors that have infestations until the issue has been resolved.

**Bed bug infestations can happen to anyone, they are not an indicator of poor sanitation.**

Bed bugs



Bed bugs excrete digested blood which appears as dark spots or smears in harborage areas.

Bed bugs will feed on a variety of animals but prefer humans. Pets such as dogs and cats are not ideal hosts, and will not be the source of bed bug infestations. But washing pet bedding is advisable.

On their preferred host – us, bed bugs feed for about ten to fifteen minutes during the night, then drop off and crawl to a sheltered crack or crevice where they remain for a few days while digesting the meal.

Leaving lights on during the night will not prevent the bed bugs from feeding. Sleeping during the day will cause the bed bugs to reverse their cycle so they feed during the day.

Bites on exposed skin after sleeping.



People experience a range of reactions to the bites; some have no reaction, while others experience a reaction to the saliva injected while the insects feed. People may develop itchy even painful welts immediately or up to two weeks later. Repeated bites tend to generate more severe reactions, and heavy infestations of bed bugs can cause anemia in children and the elderly. Secondary infections occur due to the scratching of bites. **Try to avoid scratching.**

ARS 33-1319 states that a tenant shall not knowingly move materials into a dwelling unit that are infested with bed bugs. It also requires that tenants provide the landlord written or electronic notification of the presence of bed bugs.

**If you suspect that you may have bed bugs, call in a work order immediately so it can be verified by a trained professional  
256-3146**

The Housing Department (HD) will respond to your request within 24 business hours and will schedule an inspection of the premises by a certified inspector. Further appropriate action will be taken as is required.

Please be reminded that should bed bugs be detected, the HD and its licensed contractor will need assistance in the preparation of your dwelling unit for treatment(s).

**Never attempt to treat bed bugs yourself. Improper use of pesticides can injure you, your pet, or make the infestation worse.**

#### Managing bed bugs

- Residents should report bed bug sightings to property managers and call in a work order – 256-3146.
- Inspect and monitor for bed bugs constantly
- Vacuuming is an effective way to remove bed bugs and the dirt that provides them with shelter. After each use, remove the vacuum bag and seal it in a plastic bag for disposal.
- Bed bugs are sensitive to extreme temperatures in all of their life-stages. So toss all infested clothing/bedding in a hot (140°F) dryer for 40 minutes.
- Encase infested mattresses and box springs in encasing designed for bed bugs.
- Throw out infested things that cannot be washed and dried. Wrap things in plastic and place them in an outside dumpster. Cut and mark mattresses and items so other people are not tempted to move infested things into their own home.
- Reduce clutter

**Bed bugs are a growing problem. Early detection and immediate involvement of an experienced pest management professional will help to minimize costs, uncomfortable bites, and stress.**



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