



Multnomah County Environmental Health Services created this information sheet in response to an increase in questions about Bed Bugs.

Multnomah County Health Department

Bed Bugs

Questions & Answers

What are Bed Bugs?

Bed bugs, (*Cimex spp.*) are nuisance insects that feed at night on the blood of humans and other warm-blooded animals (including birds, rodents, bats, and pets). Adult bed bugs appear oval in shape, slightly smaller than a dime and are reddish brown, and wingless. They are not known to transmit disease.



Not actual size

Common Bed Bug

Where do Bed Bugs live?

Bed bugs hide during the day in dark, protected areas such as cracks and crevices, windows, door frames, mattresses, picture frames, loose wallpaper, baseboards. Bed bugs do not travel far on their own and are transported in luggage, clothing, bedding and furniture. Likelihood of a bed bug infestation increases where there is a high rate of occupant turnover such as in hotels, shelters, airplanes, trains, and apartments. Typically infestations are not a reflection of poor hygiene or housekeeping.

How do I know if I have Bed Bugs?

An infestation can be recognized by reddish or black stains on bedding and walls from crushed adults and or blood stains caused by feeding. An odor may be present in a room with a severe infestation. Symptoms include bites found on exposed skin not covered by clothing and skin irritations such as itchiness, inflammation and welts. If an allergic reaction occurs, see your health care provider.

Who should I call to positively identify Bed Bugs?

Use a sealable vial, small container, or plastic bag to capture bugs noticed near sleeping areas. Do not crush or damage the bugs. Seal and freeze for three hours. Send to Multnomah County Vector and Nuisance Control, "Attention Bug Sample", 5235 North Columbia Blvd., Portland OR 97236 or deliver to our office, M-F, between the hours of 8:00am-4:30pm. Call for more information (503) 988 - 3464.

**Multnomah County
Vector Control**

503-988-3464

Multnomah County Health Department

Bed Bugs

Questions & Answers page 2

How do I control Bed Bugs?

Once a bed bug infestation is confirmed, it can be controlled by following an "integrated pest management" approach that uses multiple methods at the same time.

Prevention

- Routinely inspect for and detect bed bugs
- Inspect traveler's clothing and luggage; keep infested items out.
- Seal exterior cracks and crevices, repair screens on doors and windows
- Properly train staff on how to prevent and reduce bedbug infestations and communicate relevant information to residents.

Sanitation

- Launder bedding and clothing in hot water
- Frequently vacuum mattresses and premises; immediately seal vacuum bags and discard in an outdoor trash container
- Carefully scrub mattress seams and bed frames to remove bed bug adults and eggs.
- Seal mattress or consider discarding mattresses in severe cases

Insecticides

- Select a licensed professional to apply insecticides for the control of bed bugs in all life stages (egg to adult).
- Insecticides should only be applied according to the manufacturer's instructions. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) and other precaution information should be provided to you in advance.
- Bedding for infants should not be treated with residual insecticides, but may be treated with a short-lasting insecticide that is thoroughly dried and aired before use.

How should I handle an infestation if multiple persons could be exposed to Bed Bugs?

- Immediately respond to potential bed bug complaints; keep an itemized list of action steps completed to resolve the situation.
- Create a detailed procedure for staff and residents to follow if they feel they have been exposed to bed bugs.