

## Environment

### Bed Bugs

#### What are bed bugs?

Bed bugs are insects that, as adults, have oval-shaped bodies with no wings. Prior to feeding, they are about 1/4 inch long and flat as paper. After feeding, they turn dark red and become bloated. Eggs are whitish, pear-shaped and about the size of a pinhead. Clusters of 10- 50 eggs can be found in cracks and crevices. Bed bugs have a one-year life span during which time a female can lay 200-400 eggs depending on food supply and temperature. Eggs hatch in about 10 days.

#### What do bed bugs feed on?

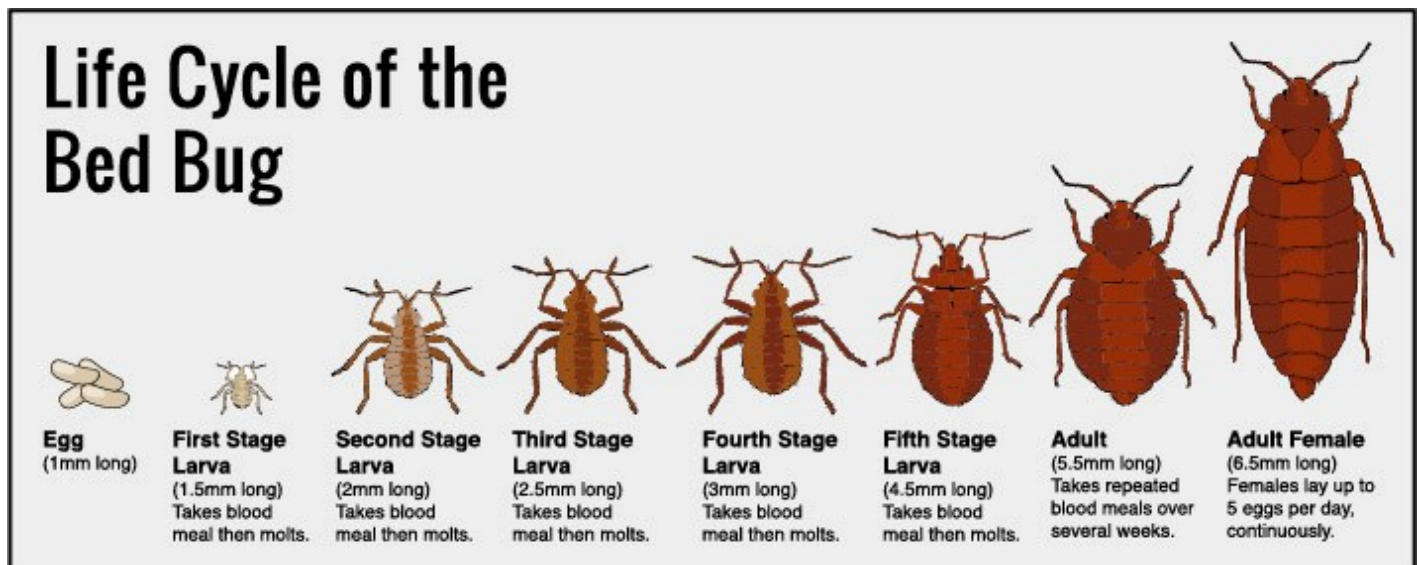
Bed bugs prefer to feed on human blood, but will also bite mammals and birds. Bed bugs bite at night, and will bite all over a human body, especially around the face, neck, upper torso, arms and hands. Bed bugs can survive up to six months without feeding. Both male and female bed bugs bite.

#### Can I get sick from bed bugs?

There are no known cases of infectious disease transmitted by bed bug bites. Most people are not aware that they have been bitten but some people are more sensitive to the bite and may have a localized reaction. Scratching the bitten areas can lead to infection.

#### What do bed bug bites look like?

When bed bugs bite people, they inject their saliva into the biting area, causing the skin to become irritated and inflamed. Individual responses to bed bug bites will vary. The skin lesion from bed bug bites may go unnoticed, or be mistaken for flea or mosquito bites or other skin conditions.



The most common rash is made up of localized red and itchy flat lesions. The classical bed bug bites could be presented in a linear fashion in a group of three, which is called "breakfast, lunch, and dinner" as small raised red swelling lesions. People with high sensitivity to bed bug saliva may develop a lump filled with blood or fluid.

### **How do I treat bed bug bites?**

Most bed bug bites go away by themselves and don't need treatment. Keep the skin clean and try not to scratch. If the bites are very itchy, your doctor may prescribe cream or antihistamines to relieve the itchiness. Oral antibiotics may be prescribed for any secondary skin infection from excessive scratching.

### **Who is most at risk?**

Occupations such as hotel room cleaning and maintenance persons, home care and nursing home workers and social workers required to repeatedly put themselves in settings where bedbugs may exist. Bed bugs have also been found in office furniture and paper or file storage areas.

### **What can I do if I have bed bugs in my work place or home?**

Your workplace management should have a bedbug protocol program.

The best method to deal with bed bugs is Integrated Pest Management (IPM), which combines a variety of techniques and products that pose the least risk to human health and the environment.

1. Consult with your local health department or a professional Pest Control operator to confirm that you have bed bugs.
2. Remove all unnecessary clutter.
3. Seal cracks and crevices between baseboards, floors and walls with caulking. Repair or remove peeling wallpaper, tighten loose light switch covers, and seal any openings where pipes, wires or other utilities services enter the area.
4. Inspect the room and furniture: inspect all cracks and crevices and look for blood spots or live insects.
5. Wash all chair covers, table cloths, bed linens and pillow cases in hot water.

Ih:cope343  
February 2011