

Battling Bed Bugs

Bed bug infestations are on the rise and it is possible for anyone to become infested with them. Awareness is the key!

Bed bugs are insects that have been found in many rental dwellings, private dwellings, hotels and motels, hostels and university/college residences.

General Facts about bed bugs:

1. Bed bugs do not transmit human disease, and therefore, do not present a significant health risk. Bed bug bites can cause an allergic reaction in some people similar to a mosquito bite. Some people do not even know if they have been bitten. Scratching the bitten areas can lead to infection.
2. Bed bugs can be seen with the naked eye. Bed bugs look similar to an apple seed in size and appearance, although they may be difficult to find.
3. Bed bugs do not jump. They spend 90% of their time hiding and are most active after dark. Bed bugs avoid light and do not like to be disturbed.
4. Bed bugs do not fly, and can easily move through a dwelling. They do not enter dwellings on their own; and are usually brought in on belongings (clothing, bedding, used furniture, etc).
5. Bed bugs are a nuisance. They can be prevented, and can be exterminated. Pesticide application alone will not kill all stages of bed bugs. It is a must to use an integrated pest management approach to bed bug control, which involves vacuuming, steaming, laundering belongings, sealing areas and gaps where bed bugs can hide.

Signs of a bed bug problem:

- Blood marks on bedding material or on the bed
- Black spotting on bedding or bed parts
- Black spotting on couch or other furniture
- Strange odours
- Redness of skin anywhere on your body
- Seeing bed bugs on mattress, box spring, baseboards, furniture and clothing

What to do...if you live in a building with bed bugs:

- Educate yourself – learn how to identify, treat and prevent bed bugs
- Monitor – check for bites on your body and blood stains on linen and clothing
- Get rid of clutter – bed bugs thrive in a cluttered environment
- Pest proof your home – eliminate bed bug hiding places by sealing all holes and gaps in baseboards, pipes and cover plates
- Don't hesitate to take action, if you find any evidence of bed bugs.

Do not panic. Bed bugs can be battled safely and successfully.

If you live in a McMaster University residence, and suspect that you have seen a bed bug, visit your service desk (Commons or Mary E. Keyes lobbies) and speak to a Housing Assistant.

Details at: http://housing.mcmaster.ca/Building_Services/bedbugs.html

If you live in rented accommodation in Hamilton, and suspect bed bugs – Hamilton Public Health requests that you contact your landlord, in writing, regarding pest control. If your landlord does not take action, please contact a Hamilton Public Health Inspector. Contact: phone: 905-546-2424 ext.5919.

For extensive information regarding bed bugs and an integrated pest management approach, please check out:

Government of Ontario Bed Bug Website – www.bedbugsinfo.ca

Toronto Public Health Website www.toronto.ca/health/bedbugs/bedbugs_factsheet.htm

City of Hamilton Public Health www.hamilton.ca/HealthandSocialServices/PublicHealth/BedBugs.htm