

## **Bed Bugs FAQ**

### **What is a bed bug?**

A bed bug is a small insect that feeds on the blood of humans and animals. Bed bugs live in the folds and crevices of mattresses, bedding, clothing, and carpets, and can be found inside backpacks, purses, box springs, furniture, electronic equipment, and other hidden, dark crevices. They can survive for more than a year without eating, and are very difficult to get rid of.

### **Where do they come from?**

Bed bugs are hitchhikers. They can hitch a ride into your room on furniture or anything else found on the street or from an unknown location. They can also be transferred from place to place when people unknowingly expose themselves or their belongings to bedbug-infested areas. The bugs can even find their way through walls, floors, and ceilings, so it is very important that even the smallest infestation be wiped out before they spread.

### **What does a bed bug look like?**

Bed bugs are small, wingless insects. They are flat and oval-shaped, and can range from translucent to straw-colored to dark reddish brown or, after feeding, blood red. Juveniles are about the size of a period in a newspaper, and adults reach approximately ¼ inch in length, or the size of an apple seed.

### **How do I know if I have bedbugs?**

Bed bugs usually leave red, itchy bite marks on your skin, though some people are less sensitive than others. They can sometimes be spotted hiding in the seams of mattresses, pillows, and covers, where they usually leave black or dark red spots and/or discarded skins. You may also smell a sweet, sickly odor.

### **Do they carry disease?**

When the bugs bite, they excrete saliva into the wound. Most people are allergic to the saliva, which will leave a mark much like that of a mosquito. Bed bugs are not known to carry any diseases, and the bites are usually not serious and will heal quickly if left alone.

### **What do I do if I find bed bugs?**

1. Tell your building manager immediately so he or she can schedule a treatment for your room. Don't worry about reporting the bugs, as they are very common, and the manager only wants to help you get rid of them. The manager will check your unit every month to make sure they do not reappear.
2. Prepare your room for the pest control company by sealing your washables and non-washables (radios, picture frames, etc.) in separate plastic bags.
3. Non-washables will be picked up from you for treatment and returned within a few days.
4. Wash ALL bedding and clothing in HOT water and dry on the hottest possible setting OR dry all bedding and clothes for 2 HOURS on HOT. Repeat before each treatment.
5. Don't remove backpacks, purses, or any other belongings from your unit until they are thoroughly checked or treated for the bugs.
6. Until you get rid of the bugs, you are encouraged to spend as little time in public spaces and other units as possible to minimize their spread to others.
7. Be sure to allow the pest control company to enter your room and work when they need to. You will be notified when it is safe to return to your room, usually after 2-4 hours.