



Indiana State  
Department of Health

# Prevention & Control

## Bed Bugs (*Cimex lectularius*)

Bed bugs are small, flat insects that feed on the blood of sleeping people and animals. They are reddish-brown in color, wingless, and 1/16 to about 1/4 of an inch long. Bed bugs can live more than a year without feeding. However, they do not transmit disease to people. They hide in dark places, easily spread from one location to another, and can “hitch a ride” on clothing, backpacks, luggage and furniture. If you suspect you have bed bugs, collect one or more and have them identified by a qualified professional. If bed bugs are confirmed, call a pest management professional. It is often beneficial to install encasements on mattresses and box springs, and bed bug traps under bed legs.

### Check

- ✓ Check the seams of your mattress, look for black/brown spots (bed bug feces).
- ✓ Check for small blood stains on sheets.
- ✓ Check for their shed “skins” which are amber-colored.
- ✓ Check your face, neck, arms and other body parts for bite marks.
- ✓ Check mattress seams, box springs, bed frames, chairs, edges of rugs and carpets, drawers, baseboards, backpacks, sleeping bags and clothes.

### Contain

- ✓ When staying in a hotel, check the room first and protect clothes and luggage by sealing them in garbage bags or other tight-sealing bags.
- ✓ Make sure to keep luggage off the floor, chairs and bed.
- ✓ Do not pick up items from dumpsters or the street - they may be infested.
- ✓ Be cautious when purchasing used furniture and clothing.
- ✓ Seal clothes in plastic bags until you can wash and dry them.

### Clear

- ✓ As much as possible, eliminate clutter that provides hiding places for bed bugs.
- ✓ Wash clothes and dry on high.
- ✓ Vacuum beds, under beds, and other hiding places. Empty vacuumed matter immediately, seal it in a garbage bag, and put it in the trash. Don't let bed bugs “hitchhike” on vacuum cleaners.