Bed Bugs Fact Sheet

What is a bed bug?

The bed bug (*Cimex lectularius*) and its relatives (Family: Cimicidae) form a small group of bloodsucking Insects. The adult bed bug is brown, oval in shape and has no wings. It is about ¼ inch long, has a short broad head and the body is broad and flat. When engorged with blood, its body becomes elongated and swollen and its color changes from brown to dull red.

It has never been demonstrated that bed bugs transmit any human diseases. Bed bugs are a nuisance not a health concern. Health concerns arise when multiple bites that are scratched become open or infected.

- Nymphal stage is 14-30 days and they must eat or starve
- Entire life cycle is 4-9 weeks under ideal conditions. They eat and molt on a regular basis
- Adults have been know to survive 12 months, plus, without feeding

Bed Bug Life Cycle

7 Stages for a bed bug

- Egg – 1 mm (impervious to insecticide while inside)
- First stage larvae – 1.5 mm
- Second stage larvae – 2.0 mm
- Third Stage larvae – 2.5 mm
- Fourth stage larvae – 3.0 mm
- Fifth stage larvae – 4.5 mm
- Adult Stage – 5.5 mm (size of an apple seed, able to procreate)

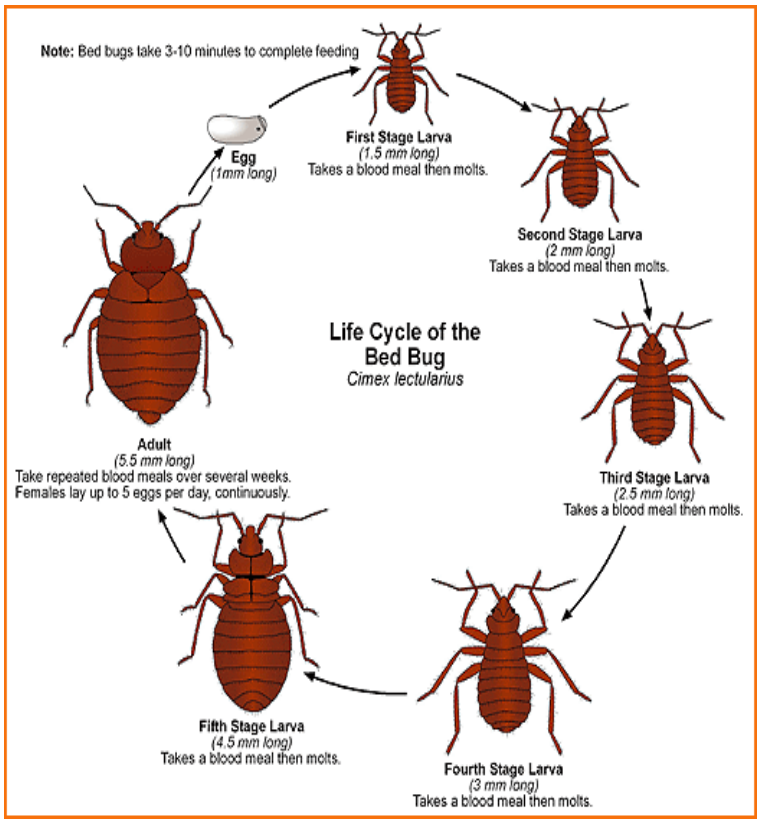
With each stage there is a required blood meal and then a moulting

Bed Bug Bites

The bites of bed bugs are usually painless, but toxic saliva is injected during feeding which could cause minor to severe itching and possibly an inflamed welt or sore. Sensitivity to bed bug bites can vary from person to person Scratching the bitten areas can lead to an infection, which may possibly require medical attention. Often, a series of two to three welts are produced in close proximity following feeding by bed bugs. If there are multiple bed bugs in the location, they may follow a blood vein for a food source resulting in multiple bites.

Bed Bug Habits

- They feed mostly when it is dark – they avoid lighted areas.
- Bed bugs may appear in dimly light rooms.
- They feed mainly on human blood and feed for 3 to 10 minutes.
- After feeding, bed bugs generally crawl to a hiding place to digest their meal and molt to next lifecycle stage.
- They can stay on a host's hair, beard, clothes etc but they don't have appendages to cling to hair, skin, fur etc.
- Bed bugs that develop solely on human hosts are primarily moved from one location to the next via infested furniture, bedding, and transfer by humans or by migration through opening in walls where heating pipes go from one unit to another unit.
- Bed bugs after an extended period of time may migrate in search of a blood meal if a dwelling has been vacated and their food supply has been cut off.



How can I protect myself?

When entering a potential affected unit:

- ✓ Ask to sit on a hard surface chair, rather than an upholstered chair. If not available, choose to stand.
- ✓ Keep jacket on or hang over back of hard backed chair, do not throw over upholstery or onto a bed
- ✓ Keep any briefcases, notebooks on hard surfaces or continue to carry on your person
- ✓ If doing physical work in unit, booties, gloves and disposable suits are an option depending on kind of work and where in unit this work is being performed.

When exiting a potential affected unit:

- ✓ Once exiting building, stamp feet, shake out any loose clothing or jackets
- ✓ Brush off pants and shirts
- ✓ If wearing gloves, booties, disposable suit, ensure, once removed, that these are placed in secure container or exterior garbage.
- ✓ Perform a visible inspection of oneself after the above and prior to leaving facility in a vehicle.