

# Bed Bugs

In recent years, bed bugs have become increasingly prevalent across the world. They are usually transported in people's luggage and via second-hand furniture. During the night, they feed on human or animal blood. Infestations have nothing to do with unhygienic living conditions and can affect anyone. Infestations can be properly treated only by a professional pest control service. If you are staying with friends or relatives, make sure that you do not transport any bed bugs in your luggage. Do not try and treat an infestation yourself with insect spray; only professional pest control can eliminate the problem. If you are worried you may have an infestation, collect the bugs and have them examined by a pest control professional.

## Appearance

Adults are 4–6 mm long; when they have recently fed, they are almost 10 mm long. Young bed bugs are similar in appearance but are smaller and lighter in color.

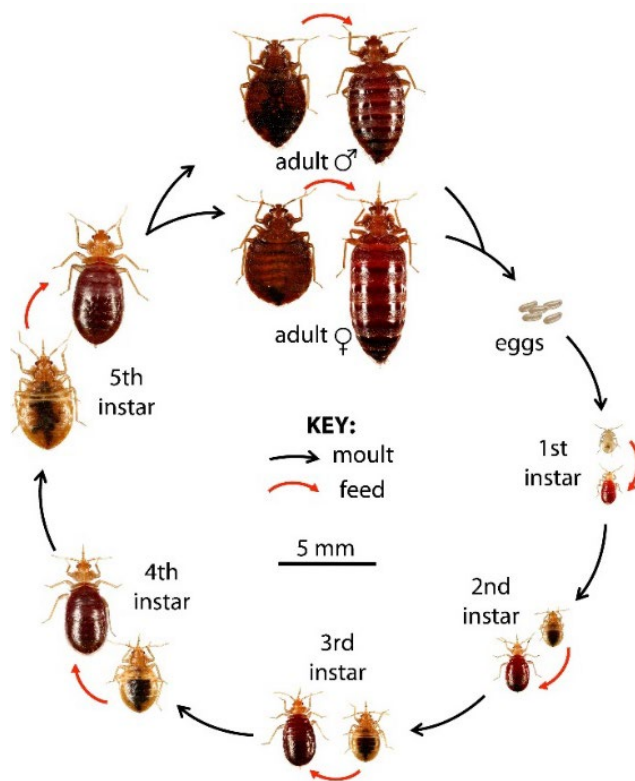


Illustration: Bed Bug Foundation

## Habits

- Feed on the blood of human beings and house pets, usually at night.
- During the day, they hide in crevices in bed frames, furniture and walls.
- May move from one apartment to another; e.g. if attempts are made to eradicate them using insect spray.
- Females can lay up to 500 eggs.
- Can survive in cold temperatures for long periods and can go without feeding for up to six months.
- Live for about a year.



Picture: Stadt Zürich, UGZ

## Impact on health

- Bite exposed areas of skin (the neck, face, arms, knees, etc.) during the night.
- Itchy skin reactions often develop only hours or days after being bitten.
- About 20 % of people have no reaction to bed bug bites.
- Bed bugs are not known to transmit any diseases.

### Signs of a bed bug infestation

- During the day, bugs hide in bed frames and crevices near the bed.
- Faecal traces (small dark spots – see photo, right) or blood spots.
- If the apartment is checked by a specially trained bed bug detection dog, treatment may be cheaper and more efficient.

### Combating bed bugs

- Undertake treatment only after the presence of bed bugs has been confirmed.
- Do not attempt to treat the infestation yourself using insect spray; the bugs may spread throughout the apartment or building.
- Leave treatment to a licensed Swiss pest control company.
- The aim should be to completely eradicate all bed bugs from the property.
- In most cases, more than one insecticide treatment is needed. Alternative: heat treatment.
- Treatment will not prevent new infestations.

### Prevention

- Check second-hand beds and furniture for bed bugs, faecal traces or blood spots.
- Used packing boxes could also be infested with bed bugs.
- Wash second-hand clothing at 60° C or tumble dry at 45 °C.
- If your apartment is infested, do not place furniture in the stairwell, cellar or loft space; the infestation may spread to neighbouring apartments.
- When disposing of furniture, please clearly mark items as infested with bed bugs or make them unusable, so that others do not take them home.
- If you are staying with friends or relatives, make sure that you do not transport any bed bugs in your luggage.

### What should I do about bed bugs in my hotel room?

- Inform the hotel management.
- Demand another room, preferably not next door.
- Place luggage as far away from the bed as possible and close all zips.

### What should I do after a night in a bug-infested room?

- Immediately empty out your bags on a balcony or in the laundry room.
- If clothes cannot be washed immediately, place in rubbish bags sealed with tape.
- Immediately wash clothing at 60° C for 30 minutes or twice at 40° C.
- Tumble-dry at 45° C for 30 minutes.
- Place in the freezer at -17° C for 24 hours.
- Spray empty luggage out of doors with insecticide spray and then air in the cellar or on a balcony.



Picture: Faecal traces of bed bugs, Stadt Zürich, UGZ

### Your rights

- If more than one apartment in the building is infested, the property manager is required to appoint a pest control company to deal with the infestation. All the apartments in the building must then be checked for bed bugs.
- The costs incurred cannot be passed on to tenants. See the leaflet, Pest infestations: your rights. Residential properties are governed by Articles 256, 257f, g, h, 258 and 259 of the Swiss Code of Obligations.

### We are here to help

Call us or send or bring in insects for us to inspect. We provide free advice to residents of Zurich.

### Pest control help desk

Telephone and personal appointments for residents of Zurich: Tel. 044 412 28 38; Mo–Fr: 1.30 pm–2.30 pm.

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