

# Fact Sheet



Division of Developmental Disabilities Health Care Services

## Bedbugs

### Health Information Fact Sheet #3

*Bedbugs:* Small, flat oval-shaped brownish insects that feed on the blood of animals and people who are sleeping. Adult bedbugs are about the size of an apple seed; however, they get larger when feeding on blood.

*Fact Sheet guidelines have been provided as general information, not as a substitution for medical treatment from a physician.*



#### Some Facts about Bedbugs:

- Bedbugs are the size of an apple seed or smaller and are a flat, oval shape.
- Bedbugs do not fly, but can move quickly over floors, walls, and ceilings.
- Although bedbugs are a nuisance, they generally do not carry or pass on diseases.
- Bedbug infestation does not mean that the home is dirty or poorly kept.

#### Risk Factors (Alerts):

*The following may increase the potential risk of bedbug infestation:*

- Traveling and/or overnight stays away from your home
- Thrift shop and/or garage sale purchases of furniture, bedding, clothing, shoes, purses, etc.
- Buying new furniture, linens, luggage, purses, or clothes from a warehouse outlet/store
- Visiting a city or state with recent bedbug activity
- Staying in or visiting a home or other location with a history of or current bedbug infestation

#### What to Watch For:

- Bugs seen in cracks & crevices
- Dark spots along mattress seams or on bedsheets
- Unexplained bug bites (welts/red marks) on exposed skin, sometimes with several welts in a row or line
- Sweet, musty odor
- Transparent, discarded skins of molting bugs

#### What to Do/Prevention:

- Avoid using discarded bedding, mattresses, suitcases, clothing, purses, and other items that could carry bedbugs and/ or their eggs.
- When traveling or staying overnight at other people's homes or in hotels:
  - *Keep belongings and suitcases on racks away from beds and walls.*
  - *Do not leave clothing, shoes, purses, and other items on the floor.*
  - *Do not bring -your belongings into your home until inspected.*
- When you have to stay somewhere that has bedbugs:
  - *Keep belongings-sealed inside plastic garbage bags as much as possible.*
  - *Inspect belongings for signs of bedbugs before returning home.*

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## What to Do When Bedbugs Are Suspected:

- Monitor members with bedbug bites:
  - Monitor for allergic reactions to bites and/or any pesticides being used to exterminate bedbugs.
- Allergic Reactions that require Medical Attention:
  - *Excessive itching*
  - *Swelling*
  - *Rashes*
  - *Redness*
  - *Hives*
  - *Nausea/vomiting*
  - *Itchiness around the mouth, eyes, or nose*
- Seek Medical Attention if red marks/welts are numerous and cover large parts of the skin, inflamed (very red/warm), painful, or pus-filled.
- Follow your provider agency's policy/protocol for bedbug infestation.
- Follow the reporting required by your agency's licensure.
- Use a *pest control professional* - treating bedbugs requires a process known as "Integrated Pest Management" (IPM).
  - Pesticides (poisons) that kill bedbugs can cause minor and serious health problems if used incorrectly around humans and animals.
  - Pesticides should never be sprayed directly on mattresses, bedding, or on animals or humans.
  - Some pesticides, when used incorrectly, can cause bedbugs to scatter and spread to other areas of the home.

## Emergency

Call 9-1-1 *immediately (and begin CPR if necessary)* when any of the following occur:

- Difficulty breathing
- Loss of consciousness
- Change in alertness or ability to pay attention
- Bleeding
- Excessive pain

*The Bedbugs Health Information Fact Sheet* is #13 in a series of *Health Information Fact Sheets* compiled by DDD Health Care Services.  
Issued July 2013; Reviewed/Revised April 2025.

