



How to Sleep Tight: Bed Bug Prevention

Bed bugs can be frustrating at best, and dangerous at the worst. Here are some tips to get to know them better, as well as preventing them from spreading to your entire house.

- **Identify them.** Bed bugs are reddish-brown, about 1/4" long, oval in shape, and flat.
- **Know how they work.** Bed bugs tend to travel on fabrics, in luggage, or in furniture, rather than hitching a ride on humans. They feed exclusively on blood, and flourish in the environment of your mattress. Bed bugs can survive for months between meals. Their bites can leave rashes or blisters, and can cause allergic reactions.
- **Understand the impacts.** Bed bugs can spread quickly in co-ops, as there are plenty of beds to burrow into. They can move from room to room by traveling through cracks in walls and floors, or spread from furniture in common spaces. A serious infestation can cause a lot of damage.
- **Wash those clothes!** When getting used clothing or bedding, wash it on the hottest setting possible before putting it with any other items that you already have. Transport it in plastic - that way bed bugs can't jump off and transfer onto other fabrics.
- **Be on the lookout.** Inspect furniture on a regular basis. If getting used furniture, investigate the crevices and seams carefully, since this is where bed bugs tend to congregate. Curbside finds may be convenient and free, but bed bugs see them as a gateway into your house.
- **Avoid used mattresses.** Bed bugs tend to burrow to the inside of mattresses and box springs, making it hard to tell if they're there or not.

The best way to deal with bed bugs, of course, is to prevent them from spreading in the first place. If you think you have a bed bug infestation:

- **Contact MCC** as a preliminary precaution and to get more information.
- **Identify that it is, in fact, a bed bug.** Other insects, like spider beetles and lice, are commonly mistaken for bed bugs. Look for evidence of bed bugs on furniture and mattresses - small brown or red spots, particularly near seams or edges.
- **Vacuum mattresses and seal them.** Leave mattresses with bedbugs in a zippered cover for at least a year. Bed bugs can survive a very long time without eating, and it's best to keep them from getting out and letting new ones in. Pull your bed away from the wall as well, so they don't climb off.
- **Put bed legs in cups filled with oil or water,** and slick the legs with petroleum jelly or tape. Bed bugs can't fly, so the only way that they can move from surface to surface is by crawling. If they can't escape your bed, they won't spread to other places, including someone else's room.
- **Wash bedding on the hottest setting,** and don't let it touch the floor. Vacuum beds, upholstery, and drapery weekly to prevent bed bugs from finding a new spot to camp out. Seal cracks in baseboards and furniture.
- **Freeze smaller items** if you think they may have come in contact with bed bugs.
- **If there is a large infestation, heat treatment is the best idea.** Seal all cracks and crevices with caulk, find a heater, take a few days' worth of clothing with you in a sealed plastic bag to prevent bed bug transfer, and leave the heater on for two weeks. Look up heat treatment procedures online for more detailed steps.
- **If necessary, call a pest-control service.** They're probably the most effective way of getting rid of bed bugs, but these can be costly - both in time and money.

By being proactive, we can keep our co-ops safe and bed bug free.