

Bed bugs are small wingless bugs that feed on the blood of warm blooded animals. Their preferred meal is human blood. They usually feed at night and cause skin irritation similar to that of other types of blood feeding insects. While feeding, they inject a small amount of their saliva in to the host's skin. However, there is no research showing that bed bugs are carriers of disease.

They are mostly to be found in rooms where people sleep and their favorite hiding places are the bed frame, mattress, and box spring. Clutter around the room also provides additional hiding places and makes it harder to eliminate them.

Because bed bugs hide in small spaces, they are easily transported to the home in luggage, clothing, pillows, boxes, and other such objects. When traveling, here's a quick 3 point inspection that you can perform: 1) check the mattress and run your hand along the seams to check for bed bugs. 2) Check the headboard. (They like to hide where the headboard meets the wall) 3) Check the dresser (open drawers and check the side that is facing the wall)

If you are going to obtain used furniture, consider very carefully the history of the furniture. Used bed frames and mattresses have the greatest chance of containing bed bugs. Therefore, inspect any used furniture very carefully for live crawling bed bugs. Additionally, please keep in mind that under the Mattress Sale Statue of NJ anyone selling a secondhand mattress must:

- Have a label...attached to the mattress and stating that the materials in the mattress "are ... secondhand" followed by a specific...description of the secondhand materials used.
- Every secondhand mattress shall have printed on the label information about:
  - a. Date of sterilization and disinfection.
  - b. Name of person performing same.
  - c. Address of person performing same.

When discarding infested furniture, it's a good idea to deface it by cutting it or poking holes in it so that it is less attractive to other people. Another option is to place a sign on the furniture stating that it is infested with bed bugs. Building managers should be sure that any disposed furniture is carted away immediately or locked up until it is taken away. This will ensure that any infested articles do not re-enter the building.

If you own your own residence and discover that bed bugs are present, we suggest that you contact a licensed pest control company and make sure that they have experience in dealing with bed bugs. If you are a tenant, contact the property-owner.

Although they can be successfully exterminated, it's not always easy. Therefore, practice good preventative measures and you'll be able to protect yourself from the menace of bed bugs.

If you have additional questions, please contact Michael Hodges, Health Educator at the Bloomfield Department of Health & Human Services at 973.680.4183.