



# Bedbugs

*What you need to know*

This handout gives basic information about bedbugs – what they look like, where they are most often found, and what to do if you think you may have them in your house.

## What are bedbugs?

Bedbugs are small insects that feed on people. The youngest bedbugs (*nymphs*) are small and white, about the size, shape, and color of a poppy seed. An adult bedbug is about the size, shape, and color of a small, very flat apple seed. They prefer to live in dark cracks and crevices, and they are most often found near where people sleep – in mattresses, box springs, bed frames, and baseboards.



Bedbugs as compared to the size of a dime

Bedbugs usually come out only at night and are very shy. When they are startled by light or movement, they will seek cover very quickly.

## Common Myths About Bedbugs

Bedbugs do **not** spread disease.

Bedbugs do **not** mean that your house is dirty. But, a cluttered environment may provide more places for bedbugs to live.

## How did they get here?

Bedbugs can travel between apartments, and they are being found more often in hotels, townhouses, and single-family homes. They can live for months between feedings. They may enter your house on used furniture, especially box springs, mattresses, and bed frames. To help avoid getting bedbugs in your house, NEVER pick up used bedding or furniture from the side of the road.

## Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC clinic staff are also available to help.

Dermatology Center:  
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## What do bedbug bites look like?

About  $\frac{2}{3}$  of people who are bitten by a bedbug have no reaction at all. Most people who do react take several months to show signs and symptoms. This means that bedbugs have probably been around for a long time before you notice anything on your skin. Bites are usually itchy red bumps that go away in 1 to 2 weeks.

## How to Find Bedbugs

The best way to find bedbugs is to have a pest-control professional do a thorough inspection of your home. This person will look closely at your bedding, and they may take apart your bed frame.

To confirm an infestation, you may want to use barriers on the bed frame. One, called the "Climb-up Insect Interceptor," costs about \$20 and can be bought online.

## What to Do Next

Bedbugs are most often found in sleeping areas, where we spend many hours. It is very important to use only safe products when treating mattresses, bedding, and other furniture.

There are hundreds of products that claim to treat bedbugs. Many do not work, work only a little, or may even harm your health.

We recommend you ask a professional pest-control service for advice.

## More Resources

- Excellent website on bedbugs and other pests: [www.identify.us.com](http://www.identify.us.com)
- Orkin: [www.orkin.com](http://www.orkin.com), 866-953-2896
- United Pest Solutions: [www.unitedpestsolutions.com](http://www.unitedpestsolutions.com), 866-771-PEST

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