

EMERGING ISSUES

BED BUGS



The following bed bug information is courtesy of the Alberta Residential Landlord Association.

RECOGNIZING A BED BUG

❖ *FROM ITS APPEARANCE*

Bed bugs are small insects that feed mainly on human blood. A newly hatched bed bug is semi-transparent, light tan in colour and the size of a pin head. Adult bed bugs are flat, have rusty red coloured oval bodies and are about the size of an apple seed. Bed bugs may be confused with other small household insects including carpet beetles, sowbugs and newly hatched cockroaches (nymphs).

❖ *FROM ITS MARKINGS, DROPPINGS AND EGGS*

Blood stains, droppings and eggs can be found in several locations including:

- Mattress seams and tufts, sheets, pillow cases and upholstered furniture.
- Crevices and cracks in furniture.
- Baseboards of walls.

❖ *HOW BED BUGS GROW AND REPRODUCE*

Bed bugs are most active when we sleep. They crawl onto exposed skin, inject a mild anesthetic and suck up a small amount of blood. Most people never feel the actual bite.

❖ *THE HEALTH EFFECTS OF BED BUGS*

Although bed bugs and their bites are a nuisance, they are **not** known to spread disease.

❖ *PREVENTING BED BUGS FROM INFESTING YOUR HOME*

Bed bugs can enter homes by latching onto used furniture, luggage, shoes and clothing, and can travel along connecting pipes and wiring.

Never bring bed frames, mattresses, box springs or upholstered furniture found on the street into your home. Check all used or rented furniture for bed bugs.

When traveling, inspect the bed and furniture. Keep suitcases off the floor and bed and inspect them before you leave.

If you suspect you have been around bed bugs, immediately dry your clothing on the hottest setting for 30 minutes or store it in a sealed plastic bag until you can put clothing in the dryer.

Seal cracks and crevices in walls and baseboards with caulk even if you don't have bed bugs. This will help prevent bed bugs and other pests from coming in.

❖ **INSPECTING FOR BED BUGS**

Look for bed bugs, blood stains, droppings and eggs (a flashlight and a magnifying glass will help). Start by looking in an area three to four metres (10 to 20 feet) around where you sleep or sit.

❖ **CONTROL MEASURES**

A bed bug infestation can happen to anyone and control measures **must** be started as soon as possible and continued until the bed bugs are gone from your home. It may require several weeks of inspecting your home for bed bugs.

Having bed bugs is stressful. Getting rid of them requires lots of hard work and extra expense. Treatment is more successful if a combination of physical and chemical control measures is used.

❖ **CHOOSING AND WORKING WITH AN APPROVED PEST CONTROL OPERATOR**

Bed bug infestations usually require the services of a well-trained, licensed pest control operator, also called exterminators. Professional pest control operators **must** be approved by Alberta Environment.

❖ **ASK THE PROFESSIONAL TO:**

- Use the least-toxic pesticide labeled for bed bugs that will be effective
- Ensure all instructions and warnings on product labels are followed
- Tell you when it's safe to re-enter a treated room
- Let you know if and when another treatment will be necessary
- Tell you when you can start your weekly cleaning

❖ **WHAT LANDLORDS AND BUILDING MANAGERS CAN DO**

Provide tenants with information about bed bugs. Encourage everyone to report bed bugs as soon as they know of a problem. Notify tenants and inspect all units adjacent to, above and below apartments found to have bed bugs.

Hire a professional pest control operator approved by Alberta Environment and/or heat treatment professional operator to treat for bed bugs. Be wary of companies that make unrealistic claims that bed bugs can be controlled with one visit.

❖ **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Alberta Residential Landlord Association:

Alberta Residential Landlord Association Bed Bug Info Sheet -

<http://www.albertal landlord.org/devlive/index.php/Resources/Bed-Bugs/>

Alberta Health Services:

Bedbug Clean-Up & Prevention - <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Alberta/Pages/How-to-prevent-bed-bug-infestations.aspx>