

### What are bed bugs?

Bed bugs (*Cimex lectularius*) are small, flat parasites that feed solely on the blood of people and animals, including pets, while they are sleeping. Bed bugs are reddish-brown, with no wings, and range in size from 1mm to 7mm. Bed bugs generally appear at night from hiding places, looking for human blood. Bed bug infestations frequently occur near areas where people sleep such as apartments, shelters, cruise ships, buses, trains, dorm rooms, and hotels. During daytime, bed bugs hide in seams of mattresses, bed frames, box springs, dresser tables, headboards, inside cracks or crevices, behind wallpaper, or any other clutter around a bed. Bed bugs can travel over 100 feet in one night. They usually live without feeding for up to 6 months but tend to stay about 8 feet from where people sleep. Although pathogens (agents that can cause disease) have been identified in bed bugs, bed bugs have not definitely been linked to spread of disease among people.

### What are the symptoms?

Signs of bed bug infestation include red, itchy continuous insect bite marks which may appear on the face, neck, arms, hands with presence of bed bugs' exoskeletons following molting; presence of bed bugs in sheet folds and mattresses; rust-colored blood spots on mattress or nearby furniture, and sweet musty odor.

### How are bed bugs spread?

Bed bug infestations are not spread from person to person. Bed bugs may infest any setting in which they may get a blood meal; they do not suggest that people have good or bad hygiene. Bed bugs may hide in belongings that may act as a source of transmission from one location to another (e.g., suitcases in hotel rooms). At school, children and staff may bring bed bugs to school in clothes, coats, book bags or backpacks.

### Who is at risk for bed bug infestations?

The risk of getting bed bugs when visiting an infected area in the general public is the same. If you travel regularly and share living and sleeping quarters where other people have slept previously you have a higher risk of being bitten and or spread a bed bug infestation.

### What preventive measures and treatments are available?

Good hygiene to prevent itching and secondary infections, and minimal symptomatic treatment and are usually adequate for most cases of bed bug bites. Do not scratch the affected area. Antiseptic creams, or lotion, and antihistamines may help relieve symptoms. Consult with pest control professionals; inspection and pesticide application should be done by trained pest control operator only, if bed bug infestation is suspected, renters should contact their landlord or professional pest control company experienced in treating bed bugs, inspect your place of sleep for the signs of bed bug infestation regularly.



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## Bed Bugs

### What should schools do?

- Educate staff and families about bed bugs
- Backpacks and coats should be routinely separated
- Minimize items that travel between school & home and reduce clutter in school
- Persons with bed bug bites can receive antihistamine /steroid skin cream to relieve itch
- Persons with bed bug bites should keep their fingernails short to avoid skin damage due to scratching

### What are recommendations for exclusion?

None, since bed bug infestations are not spread from person to person

For more information, visit [Bed Bugs | CDC](#) and [Bed Bugs: Get Them Out and Keep Them Out EPA](#).

