

Background

[Bed bugs](#) (*Cimex lectularius*) are small, flat, parasitic insects that feed solely on the blood of people and animals while they sleep. Adult bed bugs are reddish-brown in color, wingless, range from 1mm to 7mm (roughly the size of Lincoln's head on a penny), and can live several months without a blood meal. Young bed bugs (also called nymphs) are smaller, translucent or whitish yellow in color and can be nearly invisible to the naked eye, if not recently fed. The best way to prevent bed bugs is regular inspection for the signs of an infestation.

Symptoms Associated with a Bed Bugs Infestation:

The most obvious symptoms associated with a bed bug infestation are bite marks found on the face, neck, arms, and hands or any other body parts while sleeping. Other evidence of bed bugs include:

- Bed bugs' exoskeletons after molting
- Bed bugs in the fold of mattresses and sheets
- Rusty-colored blood spots due to their blood-filled fecal material that excrete on the mattress or nearby furniture.
- A sweet must odor

How long does it take from exposure to onset of symptoms?

Bites may take up to 14 days (the life cycle of a bed bug) to develop in some people. It is important to be aware of the other cues listed to ensure that the infestation is caught as early as possible. It is important to identify the insect associated with the bite by locating the pests, because bite alone can easily be confused with bites from other insects such as mosquitoes or chiggers), rashes (such as eczema or fungal infections), or even hives. Some people do not react to bed bug bites at all.

Risk Factors Associated with Contracting Bed Bugs:

Bed bug bites affect every person differently. Bite responses can range from an absence of any physical signs of the bite, to a small bite mark, to a serious allergic reaction. Bed bugs are not considered to be dangerous; however, an allergic reaction to several bites may need medical attention.

Immediate Next Steps for Infestation Management and Monitoring:

Upon the identification of a resident or staff with symptoms consistent with bed bugs:

1. Ensure infected residents place all belongings in clear plastic bags that are sealed tightly. Sort items by type (clothes, towels, sheets, and blankets). Keep infested belongings away from clean items.
2. Have each individual shower and change into clean clothing and shoes and bag up the current (possibly infested) clothes for laundry.
3. Reduce clutter, where possible, across the congregate facility (cluttered space is a great hiding spot for bed bugs) without moving potentially contaminated belongings to areas where contamination is not known. Get rid of unneeded belonging by placing them in sealed plastic bags and disposing of them carefully, avoiding cross contamination or possibility for spread).
4. Educate residents on bed bugs and what to look for.
5. Follow all laundry cleaning steps for personal belongings.

6. All clothes, linens, pillows, shoes, coats, and children’s plush toys should be treated by placing them into a **HOT** dryer for 30 minutes. Do not overstuff the dryer, heat must reach all items. **Washing alone will not kill bed bugs.**
7. Keep items that cannot be sanitized (with chemicals or heat) inside clear plastic bags (electronics, appliances, books, etc.) and ask a professional pest manager how these items should be treated. Aerosol pesticides may be recommended for a faster solution. Storage of these items for one year is a non-toxic choice but may be difficult due to space or needs. If items are kept warm, storage time is reduced.
8. Provide vinyl or bed bug proof covered mattresses for the beds of each resident and also cover box springs if they are present, for at least a year.
9. Leave all furniture in the room that will be treated by a pest removal professional, if applicable.

Preventing Bed Bugs:

Bed bug infestations are commonly treated by insecticide spraying. If you suspect that you have an infestation, contact your maintenance team or a professional pest control company that is experienced with treating bed bugs. The best way to [prevent](#) bed bugs are regular inspection for the signs of an infestation.

More information on bed bugs can be found here: <https://www.epa.gov/bedbugs>

| Organization | Contact Information: |
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| <p style="text-align: center;">CDPH Community Congregate Settings Team</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Email: SpecialPops@cityofchicago.org Reporting Link: https://redcap.link/specpopreport</p> |