



## What are bed bugs?

- Small, flat, oval-shaped, brownish insects with no wings that feed on human blood. They are most active at night. They become swollen and reddish brown in color after a blood meal. They are visible to the naked eye. Bed bugs can survive up to a year without a blood meal.

## What does a bed bug bite look like?

- Red bumps similar to mosquito bites that are often grouped together or in a straight line
- Exposed areas like arms, legs, and backs are more susceptible to bites
- Look for small black stains (blood spots) and exoskeletons that are shed during growth on your sheets, pillows, or mattress seams

## How do they spread?

- Usually through suitcases, handbags, and on clothing and furniture that were previously used or after recent travel. Bed bugs can be found anywhere people spend time.
- They can hide in cracks of furniture, sheets, pillows, mattresses, under area rugs, couch cushions, inside electronics, like cell phones. They can also move through walls and electrical sockets.

## How can bed bugs be prevented?

- Vacuum your home regularly
  - If vacuum is canister style (does not use bags), wipe the canister with a wet paper towel or disposable wipe. Only use the paper towel/wipe for one swipe and then discard.
- Avoid used mattresses or second-hand upholstered furniture
- Inspect and clean before bringing used furniture home with soapy water or household cleaning products to remove any possible bed bugs or their eggs
- Place second-hand clothing in a sealed, plastic bag and directly empty into washing machine (wash with hot water and dry on high heat setting)
- When visiting hotels, inspect room for signs of bed bugs

## What is the treatment for bed bugs?

- Antihistamine or topical cream may be prescribed to prevent itching
- Check with your primary care physician if you have an allergic reaction
- It is not recommended to use rubbing alcohol on the skin to deter bed bugs. This is not a proven method and can cause severely dry skin, leading to cracking/small openings on the skin's surface.

## Should facilities do special cleaning?

- Yes. The best way to handle bed bugs is by using the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach:
  - Confirm the bed bug problem by using a flashlight to inspect mattresses, sheets, and pillows for signs of bed bugs or blood spots
  - Consider hiring a Pest Management Professional (PMP), they should thoroughly inspect your home, verify the type of insect, and provide instructions for preparation and cleaning
    - If they use a pesticide, make sure they are licensed and certified ([www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases/](http://www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases/))
    - Ask for brand name of pesticide and products active ingredients in case someone in your home gets sick from exposure (is pesticide appropriate for indoor use?)
    - DO NOT apply any pesticide to a surface that may be in contact with humans
    - Always follow pesticide product label instructions
  - Use a nozzle attachment vacuum to suck up bed bugs and eggs, scraping necessary to pick up eggs that often stick to surfaces
  - Immediately dispose of vacuum bag in a sealed plastic bag or container
  - After vacuuming, seal infected items in a high-quality encasement that is designed and tested to keep bed bugs in for one year to kill remaining bed bugs or eggs
  - Remove clutter, as it provides a hiding place for bed bugs
  - Wash all linens in hot, soapy water and dry in a hot dryer for at least 20 minutes

## Should an infested individual be isolated?

- No.

## If I have any other questions, whom can I contact?

- Call the Genesee County Health Department at 810-257-1017
- Visit the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services at <http://www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases/>
- See Page 86 of this document to access the Michigan Department of Health and Human Service's Bed Bug Manual