

...Don't Let the Bed Bugs Bite!

PHILADELPHIA COORDINATED HEALTH CARE

1601 Market Street, 5th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Please visit any of the following
websites for additional information:

www.bedbugregistry.com

www.nyc.gov/health

www.emoyer.com



*Enhancing Access to Community
Health Care*

Please visit us on our
website at www.pchc.org



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Many people are familiar with the saying “good night, sleep tight, don’t let the bed bugs bite”; however, not many people know that bed bugs are real! During the late 1990’s bed bugs re-emerged cross country as the common pest with which we were once familiar. Although we cannot pinpoint the exact cause of the re-emergence of bed bugs some experts contribute it to:

1) the increase of travel, 2) the lack of familiarity of bed bugs to both public and professional exterminators and 3) the change of pest control practices from chemicals such as DDT to baiting techniques.

Currently, Pennsylvania has the second highest incidence of bed bugs in the Nation, closely following New York. Sadly, bed bugs present a serious social stigma in which individuals are labeled as unclean or poor because of their exposure to bed bugs. Exposure to bed bugs; however, has nothing to do with cleanliness and/or socio-economic status. Nevertheless, the social stigma attached to exposure to bed bugs can lead to unreported cases and can potentially attribute to psychosocial issues and emotional instability.

How do you protect yourself from Bed Bugs?

The first thing you can do is to become familiar with bed bug behavior for easy detection. Bed bugs are usually carried into homes unknowingly on clothes, luggage, furniture, bedding and even humans. They like to hide in cracks and crevices including: electrical outlets in walls, behind loose wallpaper, base boards, picture frames, mattresses, headboards and nightstands. They are pretty clever bugs that will hide until the opportune time, around 2-4 AM, when they can come out to feed. In addition, they like to remain in groups and clusters; therefore, oftentimes you may notice a group of them hiding together someplace.

Next, take the necessary precautions to prevent bringing them home with you:

- 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 come into contact with bed bugs dry your clothes and belongings on high heat for 20 minutes or store in a sealed plastic bag until you can do so.
- Seal cracks and crevices with caulk, even if you don’t have bed bugs. This will help prevent bed bugs and other pests from coming in.

Bed Bugs (continued)

So, if taking the necessary precautions doesn't work for you and you have bed bugs...Now What?

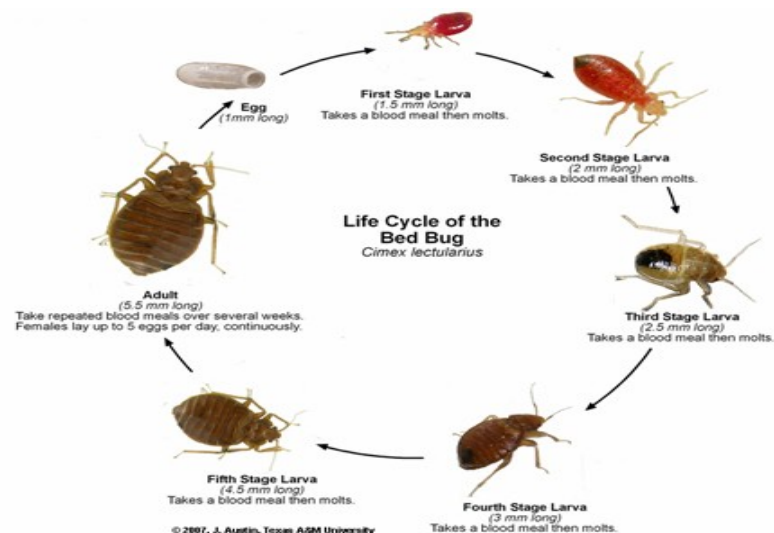
What you should do to prepare for treatment:

- Choose a good pest control company to work with.
- Thoroughly vacuum floors and carpets and dispose of vacuum bags in an outdoor trash can immediately.
- Pick-up all items on the floor.
- Remove all sheets and blankets and launder them.
- Lift the mattress and box spring out of the bed frame and stand them up.
- Remove all clothes from all dressers and leave empty.
- Remove everything from closet floors, hanging clothing can stay.
- Open sleeper sofas so they can be treated.
- **All furniture needs to be moved away from walls at least 2 feet. All pictures, mirrors, etc. need to be removed from the walls and left for treatment.**

What you can do to help eliminate bed bugs in your unit and prevent the spread of bed bugs:

- Report any evidence of bed bugs.
- **DO NOT SPRAY!!**
- Wash sheets and blankets at least once per week and dry on a hot setting.
- Run non-washable items through the dryer for 20 minutes on the hottest setting.
- Fully prepare the space for treatment as noted above.
- Avoid clutter by picking up clothes, boxes, toys, purses and other items where bed bugs can hide.
- **You do not have to throw away your mattress!!** Put your mattress and box spring in a zippered bed bug mattress encasement.

Bed bugs are a pest and can cause loss of sleep, loss of work and they can certainly pose a serious financial burden. Please use all necessary measures to protect yourself and decrease the spread of bed bugs. As always, please feel free to contact Philadelphia Coordinated Health Care (PCHC) with any of your concerns. In addition, PCHC offers training on bed bugs. To request a training contact PCHC at 215-546-0300 or email Monique Shaw at mshaw@pmhcc.org.



Sources:

- www.nyc.gov/health
- www.emoyer.com
- www.cdc.gov