



SAN BERNARDINO
COUNTY

Public Health
Environmental Health

Bed Bugs

Fact Sheet



What are bed bugs?

They are small parasitic insects that feed on the blood of people and animals usually while they sleep. Bed bugs are reddish-brown in color, wingless and range from 3/16 in. to 3/8 in.

Where are bed bugs found?

Bed bugs infestations usually occur around or near the areas where people usually sleep. During the day they hide in places such as seams of mattresses, bed frames, headboards, couches/chairs or any other objects around a bed.

Do bed bugs spread disease?

Bed bugs are not known to spread disease. Bed bugs can be an annoyance because their presence may cause itching and sometimes loss of sleep. In severe cases bed bugs can cause anemia.

What are the signs and symptoms of a bed bug infestation?

One of the ways to identify a bed bug infestation is by having bite marks on the face, neck, arms, hands or any other body parts, while sleeping. It is important to look for other clues when determining if bed bugs have infested an area. These signs include:

- Presence of bed bugs in the fold of mattresses and sheets,
- A sweet musty odor,
- Rust-colored blood spots due to their blood-filled fecal material that they excrete on the mattress or furniture.

How did I get bed bugs?

Their slim flat bodies allow them to fit into the smallest of spaces for a long period of time, even without a blood meal. Bed bugs are usually transported from place to place as people travel infecting areas.

How do bed bugs bite?

Bed bugs use their sharp beaks to pierce the skin of a host and inject their salivary fluid. The salivary fluid may cause the skin to become irritated and inflamed. A white welt may appear at the bite site, however, there are individuals who don't have an allergic reaction, and may be unaware of bed bug bites.

How are bed bugs prevented?

- Seal all sheets, blankets and pillow cases in a plastic bag before removing them from the room to avoid spreading the infestation to other areas.
- Wash all bedding with hot water and dry on the hottest setting.
- Vacuum cracks and crevices and other hiding spaces in walls, floors and furniture where adult bed bugs or eggs can be found.

For more information on bed bugs, visit

- [The California Department of Public Health \(CDPH\)](https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/bedbugs/faqs.html) (<https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/bedbugs/faqs.html>)
- [US Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](https://www.epa.gov/bedbugs) (<https://www.epa.gov/bedbugs>)
- Mosquito and Vector Control Program or contact our number below to speak with a Vector Technician



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sbcounty.gov/dph/programs/ehs/