

## HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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201 West Water Street Piqua, Ohio 45356  
(937) 778-2060 FAX (937) 778-0050

### Bed Bug Identification

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#### **What are bed bugs?**

Bed bugs are parasitic insects. Human blood is their preferred food, but they will also feed on rodents, bats, birds and pets, if humans aren't available.

#### **How do bed bugs grow and develop?**

During its life cycle, a bed bug hatches from an egg into a nymph and molts (sheds its old skin) five times before becoming a full sized adult, about the size of an apple seed. Eggs are glued onto a surface by the adult female bed bug. All nymphal stages and adults require blood meals.

#### **What do bed bugs look like?**

Adult bed bugs are small, but visible to the naked eye. An adult bed bug is from 1/4 - 3/8 inches long and reddish brown. Bed bugs have an oval shape with a flattened body when unfed; their body becomes swollen after they have fed. The young nymph (immature) that has just hatched from the egg is less than 1/10 inches long and nearly colorless, but it becomes red after taking a blood meal. There are five nymphal stages, with each stage slightly larger than the preceding one. Nymphs typically are yellowish brown to reddish brown.

#### **How do bed bugs move about?**

Bed bugs cannot fly, but they can walk very fast. They are able to cling tightly to surfaces, and they can fit into very small cracks and crevices where they often hide during the day.

#### **Where are bed bugs found?**

Bed bugs can be found in places that are frequented or occupied by humans. Bed bugs are most commonly found in dwellings with a high rate of occupant turnover, such as hotels, hostels, dormitories, apartment complexes, movie theaters, and the like. Bed bugs also can infest private dwellings. Bed bugs can infest airplanes, ships, trains, and buses.

#### **Where do bed bugs hide?**

Bed bugs will hide in mattresses and box springs, bed frames, dressers, upholstered furniture and other furniture, cracks and crevices, electrical outlets, carpet tack strips, baseboards, window and door casings, drapery pleats, wall hangings, ceiling moldings, seams in wallpaper, etc. Bed bugs prefer to contact fabric, wood, and paper surfaces -- all of which are common in human dwellings.

## **What are the tell-tale signs of bed bugs?**

The most obvious signs of bed bugs are small black spots (feces) deposited in and near bed bug hiding places. Shed bed bug skins, egg shells and live bed bugs also may be found. Another sign is blood stains, which typically occur when a bed bug is squashed. Itchy red welts may be the result of bed bug bites, but other insects, arthropods and medical conditions can produce similar reactions. It is important to confirm whether the bites were caused by bed bugs by conducting a bed bug inspection.

## **When do bed bugs feed?**

Bed bugs typically bite at night. However, they also can feed during the daytime.

## **What do bed bug bites look like?**

Bed bug bite reactions vary from person to person. Humans often exhibit a range of reactions to the bed bugs injected saliva. Some people exhibit no reaction whatsoever and others experience a raised itchy red welt at the site of the bite. Bed bug bite reactions often appear as two or more bites in a row. They often occur on exposed areas of the body, such as the face, neck, arms and shoulders. Bed bug bites may resemble bite reactions caused by other insects and other medical conditions.

## **How do I treat bites?**

Consult your physician. Anti-itching medications and antibiotic salves applied to the skin may be helpful.





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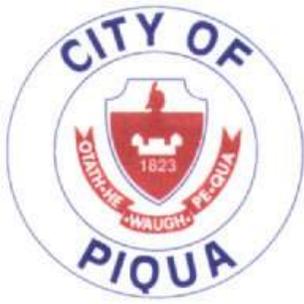
# Tips for controlling your bed bug infestation

## Bed Bug Checklist

- ✓ **DO:** Contact your landlord or apartment manager immediately!
- ✓ **DO:** Follow your exterminator's instructions to prepare your home for treatment!
- ✓ **DO:** Buy entomologist certified bed bug encasements for your mattresses and springs!
- ✓ **DO:** Wash all of your bedding in hot water and dry it in the dryer on the hottest setting for a minimum of 20 minutes.
- ✓ **DO:** Wash or dry clean all of your clothing in hot water and dry them in a hot dryer for at least 20 minutes. Store the clean clothing in tightly sealed plastic bags!
- ✓ **DO:** Eliminate clutter from your home. Store things that you want to keep in tightly covered plastic totes. Completely destroy anything that you throw away!
- ✓ **DO:** Use a licensed pest management professional (exterminator!)
- ✓ **DO:** Wrap any furniture that your exterminator tells you that he cannot treat in plastic before you remove it from your home. Completely destroy anything that you throw away!
- ✓ **DO:** Thoroughly vacuum the floor and baseboards in the rooms that have bed bugs. Vacuum often. Sprinkle a cup of talcum powder or corn starch on the floor before you sweep. Empty the dust cup or throw away the bag after you've finished!
- ✓ **DO:** Limit visitors to your home until the bed bugs are gone!
- ✓ **DO:** Check your clothing and shoes before you leave the house! Don't spread the bugs!
- ✓ **DO:** Use an anti-itching medicine on the welts to relieve the itching. Over-the-counter creams will work, but prescription anti-itching medicine may be better.

# These things will just make your bed bug problem worse:

- **DO NOT:** Ignore the problem! It will only get worse!
- **DO NOT:** File a complaint until you've given your landlord an opportunity to correct the problem!
- **DO NOT:** Use fly spray to kill bed bugs! It doesn't work, and it may spread them!
- **DO NOT:** Use farm and garden insecticides or boric acid in the house! They are all highly toxic!
- **DO NOT:** Spray rubbing alcohol in the house! It is extremely flammable!
- **DO NOT:** Throw away your furniture unless your exterminator tells you that he cannot treat it! Completely destroy anything that you throw away!!
- **DO NOT:** Give or loan clothing, furniture, toys or other personal belongings to anyone while you have bed bugs!
- **DO NOT:** Scratch the bed bug bites! You may develop a serious skin infection!



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### **Choosing a Pest Management Professional (PMP) to Treat Bed Bugs in Your Home**

This brochure lists some of the most important questions that a home owner or business owner should ask when choosing a pest management company to treat their property for bed bugs. Each pest management professional's answers may vary, but their answers should be similar to the responses in this brochure.

Some companies offer alternative treatments, such as heat treatment, which can be effective.

Always contact at least three companies to ask for estimates, and to evaluate their responses to the questions in this brochure.

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#### **Questions to Ask:**

##### **Does your company treat for bed bugs?**

Some exterminators don't treat for bed bugs. Also, bed bug eradication requires considerable experience and knowledge.

##### **How long have you been doing bed bug extermination?**

The longer a company has been in the business of killing bed bugs, the more expert they typically become.

##### **Are you licensed by the Ohio Department of Agriculture?**

PMPs MUST carry a valid pesticide applicators license from the Ohio Department of Agriculture. You can check the status of their license by calling 18002821955, extension 31, or you can find them online at: [www.agri.ohio.gov](http://www.agri.ohio.gov). Never use an unlicensed applicator!

##### **Can you provide references?**

They should answer, "Yes." Don't hesitate to contact two or three of the references.

##### **How much will the treatment costs?**

Some companies charge an inspection fee, but others do not. The cost of the first treatment and followup treatments may vary, but are likely to be in the \$200 to \$500 range.

##### **Will you provide an estimate?**

Most companies will provide you with an estimate.

##### **How long will it take to get rid of the bed bugs?**

A single treatment rarely, if ever, eliminates bed bugs. Most homes require three or four treatments, and more may be needed if the infestation is severe. The home should be retreated within seven to 14 days. Anything beyond 14 days is too long.

**Should I throw away my furniture?**

The pest management applicator should tell you to keep your furniture until they have inspected it, and determined whether or not they can treat it. If the PMP cannot treat a piece of furniture, do not remove it unless it is sealed in plastic to keep the bugs from being spread. Anything that you throw away must be completely destroyed, so that someone doesn't take it.

**How will you treat my home?**

An in-depth inspection is the first step to determine where the bed bugs are hiding. Treatment will involve using various chemicals on the bed, baseboards, light switches, etc. to kill the bed bugs. The technician should be able to explain exactly how your home will be treated.

**What will you use to treat my home?**

There are many different chemicals that are used for bed bug treatment. Some of the common ones are: Suspend SC, Bedlam, Phantom, Sterifab, Deltadust, Gentrol, and Diatomaceous Earth. PMPs usually use several different insecticides and formulations when treating for bed bugs.

**Do you rotate the chemicals?**

Bed bugs are becoming resistant to some of the commonly used chemicals. It is best not to continue to use the same insecticide(s), but to rotate the chemicals that are used.

**Will you treat my whole house (or business)?**

The extent of the treatment will depend on the severity of the infestation. If the bed bugs are confined to one or two rooms, it may not be necessary to treat the whole house.

**What about my neighbor's apartments?**

It is always important to inspect any adjoining units since bed bugs are active insects that can move through cracks and gaps in the walls. The tenants and the property manager have to cooperate with the PMP to accomplish this.

**How do I prepare for treatment?**

The PMP should give you a detailed list of things to do to prepare your home for treatment. Removing clutter is a critical step in preparing for treatment.



- \* Red, itchy bites - especially if they appear when sleeping
- \* Small brown bugs on, or near, the bed
- \* Black spots on the sheets and mattress



# If you have **bed bugs**

- \* DO contact your landlord or a licensed exterminator
- \* DON'T use a bug bomb! It will scatter the bugs!
- \* DON'T use boric acid! It doesn't harm bed bugs!
- \* DON'T use pesticides made for garden use! They are very toxic!
- \* DON'T throw out your mattress or other furniture items!