

Bed Bugs & Mattresses



A Fact Sheet for Michigan Consumers

What are Bed Bugs?



Bed Bug
Cimex lectularius



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Reaction to bed bug bites. Bites are usually clustered on areas of the body not covered by night clothing.

Bed Bugs are small, brownish, flattened insects that feed on the blood of people where they sleep. Normally they are brought into a home or facility in furniture, household objects, or luggage. Once Bed Bugs have established in a home, they can be difficult and costly to get rid of. Some people do not react to their bites, but other people will have itchy, or painful welts. They are not known to transmit diseases, but are considered a “nuisance” or “vermin,” and therefore a public health concern.

See www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases for more information.

1

How do I know if I have Bed Bugs in my mattress?



If you have bites that you can't explain, Bed Bugs may be a culprit. Bed Bugs will try to live as close to their food source as possible. They can often be found directly on the mattress in the tufts and folds, along the seam, and even inside the mattress. They can also be found in the box-spring, bed frame, headboard and furniture near the bed. They will leave “blood spots” and cast skins on materials after they feed and this may be a sign that they're around.

How can I get rid of Bed Bugs in my mattress?

2

If you find or suspect you have Bed Bugs in your home or on your mattress, it is recommended that you call a pest management professional. Bed Bug infestations are difficult to treat in the later stages. Things you can do yourself to control Bed Bugs are:

- Vacuum the area around the bed thoroughly, and vacuum the mattress, box-spring, bed frame and area around the bed and remove excess clutter. Make sure to discard the vacuum bag or collection cup into a sealed bag or container (preferably outside) so Bed Bugs will not infest another area.
- Launder all bedding in hot water, and dry on high heat.
- Scrub the seam of the mattress and other “hiding spots” with a stiff brush to dislodge Bed Bug eggs.
- Alcohol has been recommended for controlling bed bug infestations – MDCH, however, urges caution when using flammable liquids. Use extreme caution.
- DO NOT spray pesticides on the mattress where they may come in contact with skin. Always follow label directions on any pesticide used in the home.
- If you find evidence of Bed Bugs on/in your mattress, encase the mattress and box spring with a high quality, zippered mattress cover. These are often labeled “hypoallergenic” or “dust mite proof” – this will prevent Bed Bugs from escaping the mattress and help prevent new bugs from living on the mattress. The zipper is often the “weak point” of the cover, and taping this may help.
- Steam will kill Bed Bugs – a commercial steam cleaner can be used on the outside of the mattress and box-spring and on carpeting and along the baseboards of a room where Bed Bugs may hide.
- Discarding the mattress isn't always effective – If Bed Bugs are not controlled and eradicated, a new mattress can become infested very quickly.



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If I choose to discard my mattress, what should I do?

If you find Bed Bugs on or in your mattress, cleaning and encasement are the first things that should be done. Encasing the mattress and box-spring with a zippered mattress cover will make sure that Bed Bugs can't live on the bed or any inside can't get out.

- Bed Bugs will re-infest a new mattress if the infestation in the home has not been eradicated. It may take several weeks or treatments for the infestation to be controlled.
- If you choose to discard your mattress or box-spring, please follow the guidelines below so that Bed Bugs will not be spread to others:
 - Cut the mattress in various places to make it unusable.
 - Wrap the mattress in plastic.
 - Label the mattress as "Bed Bug Infested" with paint, signs or marker.
 - If possible, break the frame of the box-spring so that it is unusable, wrap and mark as well.



Can a USED mattress be re-sold in Michigan?

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Currently there is no specific prohibition in state law on the sale of used mattresses. However, the seller would need to determine whether there are any applicable local ordinances or local health regulations. It is essential that a seller take precautions to ensure that a used mattress is sanitary and free from bed bugs and any other infestations. Selling an infested mattress poses a public health hazard, in violation of the Public Health Code. Any person who sells such goods may be subject to legal action. For legal advice, the seller should consult his or her attorney.

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If I am re-selling furniture or bedding, how can I protect consumers?

1. Educate yourself and your staff on how to identify Bed Bugs in furniture items.
2. Clean items thoroughly using vacuums, heat treatment, steam, or cleaning agents appropriate to the items.
3. Separate Bed Bug infested furniture items from other items so as not to spread the bugs.
4. If Bed Bugs are found in bedding (mattresses or box-springs) or upholstered furniture, it is difficult to ensure that cleaning alone will rid the item of Bed Bugs. Bed Bugs may be inside the items and heat or steam may not be able to reach them. Unless the item is completely reconditioned; the cover taken from frame and treated, it is unlikely the product can be determined "Bed Bug Free". DO NOT use pesticides that are not labeled for application to bedding, always follow label directions.
5. If Bed Bugs are found on other wood, metal, or plastic furniture items, the item can be successfully treated by cleaning, the use of steam, vacuuming, appropriately labeled pesticides, and removing bugs and eggs from all surfaces.
6. It is better to discard the item if unsure of Bed Bugs, than to pass on an infestation to others.