



Photo: Dong-Hwan Choe

# KEEP BED BUGS OUT OF YOUR HOME

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Bed bug pitfall traps    | ClimbUP Interceptor, Hot Shot Bed Bug Interceptor, SenSci Blackout Bed Bug Detector |
| Desiccating dusts        | Harris Resistant Bed Bug Powder, Safer Brand Diatomaceous Earth                     |
| Mattress encasements     | Mattress Safe, Protect-a-Bed, SafeRest  |
| Plant-based insecticides | Ecologic Bed Bug Killer, Proof 100% Effective Bed Bug and Dust Mite Killer          |

Bed bugs are small, flat insects that hide in tight spaces like mattress seams and cracks in furniture. They are similar in color to an apple seed, but a bit smaller. Young bed bugs start off about the size of a poppy seed. They bite us while we are resting or sleeping.



Actual size  
adult and egg.

Anyone can get bed bugs. Infestations are becoming more common, and once you have them, they can be hard to control. There are some things you can do yourself, but you may need to use a pest control professional to successfully identify and control bed bugs. If you rent and have bed bugs, you will need to work with your landlord to make sure bugs are eliminated.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Spraying bugs directly with eco-friendly products is effective, but insecticides alone cannot eliminate a bed bug infestation. Over-the-counter 'bug bombs' are not effective and may scatter bed bugs into new rooms in your home or into neighbors' apartments.



Bed bugs hatch from eggs (on left), developing into adults (on right).

- **Look for signs of bed bugs and know where they hide.** They aren't just on mattresses. Check bed frames, headboards, along baseboards, under and behind furniture, around electrical sockets, and any

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Bed bugs do not transmit diseases.
- Like mosquitoes, bed bugs feed on human blood. They may occasionally feed on pets and other animals.
- Some people have no reaction to bed bug bites; others can suffer itchy welts.
- Store bought "bug bombs" are ineffective and can push bed bugs into other rooms.
- Don't throw out infested items! Most can be treated.
- Bed bugs move around by hitching rides on furniture, bedding, baggage, clothing, and other personal belongings.

other dark hidden areas near beds. Use a bright flashlight.

- **Catch bugs with a lint roller or packing tape.**
- **Vacuum infested areas thoroughly.** This can quickly remove many live bugs. Immediately after vacuuming, **remove the vacuum bag or canister contents**, seal in a plastic bag and dispose of right away. Vacuuming alone will not eliminate an infestation.
- **Use the clothes dryer to kill bed bugs.** You can kill all stages of bed bugs on dry cloth items by tumble drying them for 15 minutes on "high." If items are wet, dry them first, and then continue tumbling on "high" for at least an additional 15 minutes. **Wash and dry your sheets at least every 2 weeks.**



Choose eco-friendly products for your home and garden. Look for this symbol before you buy.

- **Consider desiccant dusts.** These products kill bugs and their eggs by drying them out. Dusts can irritate your lungs, so they should only be used in wall voids, cracks, and other areas where they won't be breathed in.
- **Protect your mattress and box spring with mattress encasements.** These covers seal bugs inside and make bed inspection easier.
- **Consider pitfall traps for use under beds and furniture legs.** These traps help detect bed bugs, and may also help prevent bed bug bites. Be sure to pull beds, sofas and other furniture away from the wall, and keep bedding from touching the floor.
- **Remove as much clutter as possible,** especially around your sleeping area. Clutter hides bed bugs and makes inspection and control difficult.

If you rent:

- **Before you move in,** ask if the unit has been inspected for bed bugs. Landlords may not knowingly rent out homes with bed bugs.
- **Tell your landlord immediately if you see bed bugs.** The longer you wait, the harder it will be to control the bugs. In California, landlords must conduct inspections when they are notified of bed bug problems.

**Remember, there is no magic formula that will guarantee bed bug elimination. These tips are not intended to replace a treatment program by knowledgeable professionals.**

## WHEN YOU TRAVEL:

- **Check your hotel room.** Travel with a flashlight and inspect the bed, bed skirt, nearby furnishings, baseboards, drapes, and if you can, behind the headboard and items hanging on the wall. If you find bed bugs or their signs, request to be moved. Inspect the new room, too.

If you wish to take extra precautions:

- **Keep your luggage in the bathtub** or in a sealed plastic bag. Bed bugs are unlikely to be in the bathroom.
- **When you get home, open your luggage outside the house** and put the contents into a plastic bag.

## HOW CAN YOU TELL IF YOU HAVE A BED BUG INFESTATION?

Getting bug bites doesn't necessarily mean you have bed bugs; you also need to look for:

- **Dark, rusty or reddish spotting or staining** on sheets, mattresses, walls, and around small, dark spaces.
- **Live bugs, eggs, egg shells, and shed skins.**



Photo: Changlu Wang

*Bed bugs live in groups near places we sleep or rest. One common hiding spot is along rolled seams of mattresses (shown here). Look for bugs, their eggs, their shed skins, and their blackish fecal spots.*

Carefully inspect luggage with a light and magnifying glass before you bring it inside. Store luggage far from sleeping and resting places.

- **Wash and/or dry everything you can.**

**For more detailed information about bedbugs, go to:**

[stopbedbugs.org](http://stopbedbugs.org)

[www.cchealth.org/bedbugs](http://www.cchealth.org/bedbugs)

[ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7454.html](http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7454.html)



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[WWW.OURWATEROURWORLD.ORG](http://WWW.OURWATEROURWORLD.ORG)

Common home and garden pesticides are found in stormwater runoff, treated wastewater, and in local waterways, sometimes at levels that can harm sensitive aquatic life. **Our Water Our World** is a joint effort by water pollution prevention agencies, participating retail stores, and pesticide distributors and manufacturers—working together to reduce the risks associated with pesticide use.

**Our Water Our World** fact sheets and store displays educate residents about less-toxic pest management. For the rest of the series of fact sheets, visit [www.OurWaterOurWorld.org](http://www.OurWaterOurWorld.org). Look for the **Eco-friendly** tag next to less-toxic products in participating stores and nurseries. See the *Pesticides and Water Quality* fact sheet for information on active ingredients in common pesticides that may cause water quality problems.

Pest control strategies and methods described in this publication are consistent with integrated pest management (IPM) concepts, and are based on scientific studies and tests in actual home and garden settings. Use suggested products according to label directions and dispose of unwanted or leftover pesticides at a household hazardous waste collection facility or event. For more information on pesticide disposal, visit [www.earth911.com](http://www.earth911.com). No endorsement of specific brand name products is intended, nor is criticism implied of similar products that are not mentioned.

For more information, contact:

Bio-Integral Resource Center (BIRC), 510.524.2567, [www.birc.org](http://www.birc.org)

University of California Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners in your area

University of California IPM website, [www.ipm.ucanr.edu](http://www.ipm.ucanr.edu)