

RECOGNIZING BED BUGS

What do bed bugs look like? Bed bugs are reddish/brown, oval shaped insects that lack wings. Normally, between feeding events, they are quite flat and resemble a watermelon seed. When fully fed their body greatly distends and lengthens.

Adult bed bugs are about 1/5-in (4-5 mm) long (about twice that when recently fed).

However, immature stages that have recently hatched are much smaller and a range of sizes representing different life stages are normally present. The smaller stages of bed bugs are lighter brown than the adults and a dark area may be visible in the center of the body.



Adult bed bug settling on a human arm to feed.

Where would I find bed bugs? The great majority of bed bugs will be on or in the near vicinity of sleeping sites used by humans. Bed bugs feed at night, always avoiding light, and spend the rest of the time tucked in cracks and crevices such as mattress seams and box springs, corners of bed frames and side tables, or behind molding and pictures.



Bed bug eggs and fecal spotting.



Hatched bed bug eggs. Photo courtesy of Gary Alpert

Bed bugs tend to group in dark enclosed areas to rest between feeding events. These aggregation sites may be indicated by spotting produced by bed bug excrement, oval cream colored eggs, old skins from molted bed bugs as well as various active life stages.



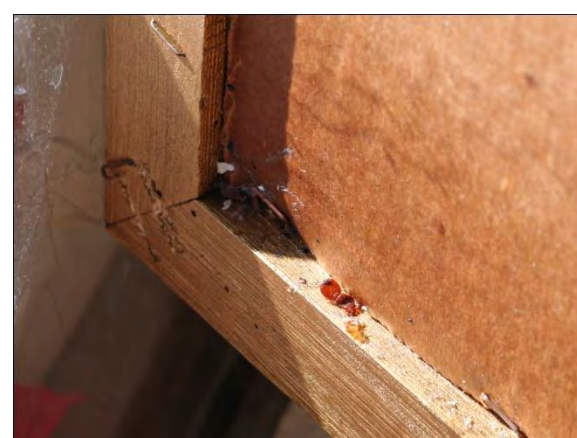
Bed bug nymphs. Photo courtesy of Gary Alpert



Various life stages of bed bugs.



Newly hatched bed bug nymph. Photo courtesy of Gary Alpert



Bed bug adults, nymphs and fecal spotting on the back of a picture frame.



Bed bug adults, nymphs, cast skins and fecal spotting on the bottom of a box spring.



Bed bug fecal spotting on the bottom of a rug.



Bed bug hiding areas on the underside of a nightstand.



How do I protect myself? Bed bug infestations have dramatically increased in Colorado and around the world. Be cautious when bringing used furnishings into your home/apartment/dorm room. Bed bugs can also be acquired while traveling. When traveling keep your belongings off the bed and away from the sleeping area. Place all clothes in a plastic bag when you are done using them. When you get home empty the plastic bag directly into a clothes dryer and run on a long hot cycle. Heat over 125° F for one hour will kill all life stages of bed bugs.

Actual Size



Starved bed bug



Well fed bed bug