

SENTINEL PEST MANAGEMENT

First it must be understood that *there is nothing you can do to guaranty that you will not get bed bugs*. Bed bugs are probably the most successful hitch-hikers known to man and they can find their way almost anywhere given enough time. However, there are things you can do to decrease the chances of introducing bed bugs into your home.

Bed bugs are not caused by poor sanitation but cleanliness can deny them harborage areas (hiding spaces). Also, the less clutter you have in your home, the easier it will be to identify signs of a bed bug infestation. Clean your home regularly. When cleaning there is the possibility that you may remove any bed bugs or bed bug eggs that may have made their way into your home. After vacuuming, *throw the vacuum bag away outside*.

- 1) Vacuum floors regularly (especially around beds and furniture).
- 2) Vacuum seams of beds, furniture, and edges of baseboards using a crevice tool
- 3) Remove clutter (especially around beds and furniture)
- 4) Launder your bedding (including pillow cases) often on as hot a temperature as possible *that will not damage your bedding*.

Bed bugs can hide almost anywhere and fit into any space as thin as a piece of paper, so inspecting everywhere a bed bug can hide is time consuming and is best left to licensed professionals if you suspect you have bed bugs. But doing spot inspections can help with early detection of bed bugs and if you travel a lot, then you should do them at least once a month.

- 1) Check the seams of your mattress and box springs for the tell-tale signs of bed bugs such as blood spots, skin casts (shed skins), and fecal matter.
- 2) Take your pillows out of the pillow cases. Inspect both the pillows and the pillow cases (especially around the seams)
- 3) Check your sheets for blood spots (sleeping on light colored sheets will help identify the blood spots easier)
- 4) Check behind picture frames or wall ornaments hung above or near your bed.
- 5) Check behind head-boards and dressers or night-stands next to your bed
- 6) Check the baseboards and around the outlets near your bed

Bed-bugs are great hitch-hikers and can travel on or in almost anything. It doesn't matter if you shop at a thrift store, discount store, or major department store; if you are buying a stylish new dress, a cool antique dresser, or a brand new top of the line bed set, there is always the possibility that there may be an unseen bed bug waiting to hitch-hike a ride to your home. Always check *anything* you bring into your home regardless of where you got it from. When possible, it is highly recommended **NOT** to bring any used furniture or beds into your home. *Never pick up used furniture or beds that people have thrown out or left on the curb*.

- 1) Make sure all new mattresses and box springs are wrapped tightly in plastic before bringing them into your home. *Be sure to make sure there are no holes in the plastic*. If they are not wrapped in plastic, thoroughly inspect the seams for bed bug evidence.
- 2) Inspect all furniture (whether used or new) especially around any seams or crevices. If the furniture has drawers, pull them out and check in the corners. Turn the drawers over and check the corners and runners.
- 3) Wash all new clothing before bringing it into your bedroom. You can also just put the clothing in the dryer on as high a temperature as possible for at least 30 minutes without washing it. If this is not feasible, inspect the clothing before putting it with the rest of your clothes taking care to check all the seams. Once done inspecting the outside of the clothing, turn it inside out and do another inspection.

Bed bugs can travel through shared walls and by following pipes, electrical, or cable lines. As with all pests, one of the best ways to keep from having a problem is to seal off as many access holes into your home as possible.

- 1) Seal cracks and crevices especially around pipes and outlets.
- 2) Seal all holes
- 3) Seal all floorboards
- 4) Make sure faceplates are secure on all outlets and light switches. If you are not using both plugs in an outlet, it is a good idea to use baby-proof plugs to seal the unused plug.

Taking a vacation can relieve a lot of stress, but if you bring back bed bugs as a souvenir your relief could be short lived. It is always a good idea to research the hotel you will be staying at before you make a reservation just to make sure bed bugs have not been an issue. There are a couple of web-sites like www.bedbugregistry.com that you can check to see if your hotel as had any incidents. Even the best hotels may show that they had a bed bug outbreak so what you should look for is whether the hotel is showing *repeated* outbreaks or complaints about bed bugs. Inspect your hotel room when you first enter it. Put your suitcase in the bathtub until after you have finished your inspection. Your inspection should include inspecting the seams of the mattress and box spring, inspecting the sheets, looking behind the headboard, inspecting the floor boards near the bed, and inspecting the seams of any couch or chair in the room.

- 1) If you have a pest control company, have them treat your luggage before you leave. This will help prevent you from picking up bed bugs when your luggage comes in contact with other people's luggage in the overhead storage, cargo hold, or even on the luggage carousel.
- 2) When returning from vacation, unpack your luggage in the garage. Inspect any souvenirs before displaying them in your home. Immediately transfer your clothing to plastic bags. Keep them in the tied plastic bags until you have time to wash and dry them on as hot a temperature as possible *without doing damage to your clothing*. If you have a pest control company, have them come out and treat your luggage before bringing it into your home.

Install Bed Bug Certified Encasements on your bed. Beds can be one of the most expensive furnishings in your home, so protect your investment by putting **Bed Bug Certified** Encasements on your bed. This will eliminate areas on your bed that bed bugs can hide. It will also save you from having to replace your bed if you do get bed bugs in the future. **It is very important that you make sure the encasements are bed bug certified, otherwise you may just be providing bed bugs with an ideal hiding place.*

- 1) Put both your mattress **and** box spring in bed bug certified encasements. Many people make the mistake of encasing their mattress not realizing that there are still plenty of hiding places in their box spring.
- 2) Make sure encasements fit correctly. If the encasement is too big then the folds created by the extra material can provide new hiding places for bed bugs
- 3) Make sure encasements are sturdy. Buying plastic encasements may seem like a good inexpensive way to protect your bed, but they tend to tear easily
- 4) Inspect your encasements regularly for any holes. If there are holes in your encasement, you are providing bed bugs the perfect hiding place...someplace close to their food source (which is you) and somewhere they won't be seen.

Deny Access To Your Bed.

- 1) Pull your headboard and bed a few inches away from the wall.
- 2) Keep blankets and bed skirts off the floor
- 3) Keep bed side tables and other furniture from touching your bed
- 4) Do not store items under your bed
- 5) Refrain from putting items (such as purses, laptops, baby bags, backpacks, etc.) directly on your bed

If you do suspect you have bed bugs, get professional help immediately. Getting rid of the infested furniture is rarely a permanent solution to getting rid of bed bugs and can actually make matters worse by inadvertently dropping bed bugs and bed bug eggs in previously 'clean' rooms. Experts agree that bed bugs are one of the few insects that REQUIRE professional help to get rid of them.

If you have any questions about bed bugs or would like a bed bug inspection, please give us a call at (949) 716-5222.

Sentinel Pest Management

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