

Parent Information Sheet: Bed Bugs

Source: Medline Plus www.medlineplus.gov

Bed bugs feed on blood and cause itchy bites. Adult bed bugs are brown, 1/4 to 3/8 inch long, and have a flat, oval-shaped body. Young bed bugs (called nymphs) are smaller and lighter in color. Bed bugs hide in a variety of places around the bed. They might also hide in other places, such as in the seams of chairs and couches, between cushions, and in the folds of curtains. They come out to feed on blood about every five to ten days. They can survive over a year without feeding.

To prevent bed bugs in your home:

- Check secondhand furniture or clothes for any signs of bedbugs before bringing them home.
- Use a protective cover that encases mattresses and box springs. Check it regularly for holes.
- Reduce clutter in your home so they have fewer places to hide.
- Unpack directly into your washing machine after a trip and check your luggage carefully. When staying in hotels, put your suitcases on luggage racks instead of the floor. Check the mattress and headboard for signs of bedbugs. Do not lay any clothing on the floor.

To get rid of bedbugs:

- Wash and dry bedding and clothing at high temperatures.
- Use mattress, box spring, and pillow encasements to trap bed bugs and help detect infestations.
- Use pesticides if needed, but get the advice from a professional. Do not sleep on a mattress that has just been treated with a pesticide.
- Vacume infested areas often then dispose of the vacume bag in a trashliner.

Unlike some other pests, bed bugs don't transmit and spread diseases

Contact your medical provider, school nurse or Maricopa County Health Department with questions (602.506.6868)