



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

NORWALK HEALTH DEPARTMENT

BED BUG FACT SHEET

What Are Bed Bugs?

Bed Bugs (*Cimex lectularius*) are parasites that feed on humans. In the past, widespread use of pesticides greatly reduced their numbers. However, over the past decade, bed bugs are making a comeback. Their growth is a result of more people traveling and lack of awareness. They are being found more often in homes, apartments, hotels, motels, dormitories, shelters and on different types of transportation.

Detection

Adult bed bugs have flat, rusty red colored oval bodies. They are small, approximately 1/4 to 5/8 inches long. Eggs are white and are 1/32 inch long. Bed bugs do not fly, but can move quickly across floors, walls and other surfaces. Bed bugs are not known to spread disease.

Signs Of An Infestation

Bed bugs are most active in warmer weather. They come out to feed at night and hide in cracks and crevices during the day. They feed for a period of 3 to 5 minutes and then they drop off the host. They can be found in the seams and folds of mattresses as well as the bed frame. In some cases they may be found behind baseboards, window and door casings, pictures and picture frames, in furniture, loosened wallpaper, curtains and cracks in plaster. Bed bugs prefer to hide close to where they feed. If necessary, they will crawl more than 100 feet to obtain a blood meal. Bites can occur on any exposed skin and you may notice itchy red bumps or swelling.

Small bloodstains may appear from crushed insects, or dark spots from their droppings.

Control And Prevention

The best way to prevent bed bugs is to keep them from entering your home. It is important to inspect baggage and clothing when returning from a trip. Also, inspect secondhand beds, furniture and clothing before purchasing. If a bed bug problem occurs it is important for the tenant and/or property owner to work together to control the problem. Vacuum thoroughly, especially along carpet edges. Throw out the vacuum bag in a sealed plastic bag and remove from home immediately. Clean bedding, linens, curtains, rugs, carpets, and clothes. To kill bed bugs, wash items in hot water and dry them on the highest dryer setting. Scrub mattress seams with a stiff brush to dislodge bed bugs and their eggs. Vacuum mattresses and seal with a waterproof, zippered mattress covers. Throw out infested items or clutter that can't be cleaned. Repair cracks in plaster and loose wallpaper. If the problem continues, we suggest that you seek help from a licensed pest control company.

For more information please contact the Norwalk Health Department at 203-854-7776.

