

Bed bug bites can cause intense itching and skin irritation. Bed bugs are often found in mattresses and the bites often go unnoticed until itching develops several days later. Bed bugs are not contagious and their bites do not cause disease.

WHAT ARE BED BUGS?

Bedbugs are small, wingless insects that feed on blood. Humans are the preferred hosts for the two main species, *Cimex lectularius* and *Cimex hemipterus*.

Bed bugs hide during the day in places such as seams of mattresses, bed frames, box springs, inside cracks or crevices, and usually feed at night. They are more common in apartment buildings, hotels, dormitories, and entertainment venues. They can be transported on furniture and luggage.



Bed Bug
Source: Wikipedia

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Symptoms of bed bug bites are itchy red bumps that are arranged in a line. These bite marks may take up to fourteen days to develop.

CAN I GET SICK FROM BED BUG BITES?

Bed bugs are not known to spread disease. They can be an annoyance as their presence may cause itching and loss of sleep. Severe itching can lead to excessive scratching that can sometimes increase the chance of a secondary skin infection.

HOW ARE BED BUG BITES TREATED?

Treatment to alleviate itching and good hygiene to prevent secondary infections are usually sufficient for most cases of bed bug bites. Treatment includes topical creams, such as cortisone, to relieve itching. Oral antibiotics may be given if a secondary infection occurs.

Corticosteroids may be appropriate if a person has a severe allergic reaction as well as antihistamines, to help relieve allergic reactions. Most bites heal within one to two weeks of occurrence.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- **Exercise caution.** Be mindful when traveling to avoid inadvertently bringing bed bugs home on luggage and other items.
- **Avoid buying used furniture and mattresses.**
- **Consult with a pest control professional.** If you suspect bedbugs, a professional pest control inspection and extermination is usually required.

HOW CAN I TELL IF I HAVE BED BUGS?

Bed bugs can sometimes be found within mattresses and beds. Small reddish-brown specks can be found on mattresses, linens, or walls. A professional pest control inspection is often required.



Source: Matt Bertone, NC State University

REFERENCES

[CDC: Parasites - Bed Bugs](#)

[US EPA Bed Bugs: Get Them Out and Keep Them Out](#)