

Bedbug Notice

Bedbugs are a present and growing problem in Oregon, and nationwide. It is essential that you learn what to look for, how to reduce the likelihood of getting them, what to do if you suspect you have them, and what treatment looks like if you do find them.

Mature bedbugs are about the size of an apple seed. Immature bedbugs can be much harder to see. Larvae are very tiny. Usually what people notice when they look at the crevices in their bed or furniture, are little brown streaks and spots. That's the bedbug's waste. Bedbugs hide often in the crevices of mattresses, but also in other furniture, books, clothes, linens, cardboard boxes, lamps, wall cracks, laptops, clocks, headboards, handbags, backpacks, even child safety seats or bouncers. They don't jump or fly, only crawl, but they can travel from one unit to another through ducts, pipes, electrical outlets or false ceilings.

They are usually discovered when a person gets bitten and develops an itchy rash or spots, but some people do not react to the bite of bedbugs. If caught early, eradication can be accomplished with relative ease; if not, eradication can take weeks or months and require intensive involvement on the part of residents and management.

Female bedbugs live for about one year. In ideal conditions, a single pregnant female can be responsible for producing more than 30,000 offspring within six months. Bedbugs reach sexual maturity in around five weeks and each female can lay up to 500 eggs after breeding. Bedbugs are extremely hardy and can survive up to a year with no blood meal; however, they can only survive between temperatures of 2 degrees Fahrenheit and 122 degrees Fahrenheit.

Bedbug bites can be confused with the bites of other pests, including fleas, carpet beetles, ticks, mosquito bites, cockroach nymphs, spiders, bat bugs (very similar to bedbugs, and while they prefer bats, are readily adaptable to getting a blood meal from humans). Different skin conditions such as scabies, allergic reactions and chicken pox or measles can also mimic bedbug bites. It's important to confirm whether or not there are actually bedbugs present in the unit, so finding an actual bug alive or dead is essential to learning if there is a bedbug problem in the unit.

Bedbugs are not known to spread disease, but can cause secondary skin infections from scratching the bites. They definitely result in stress, loss of work, loss of sleep, and treatment can be a financial burden to both residents and housing providers.

If you find bites on yourself or a family member, or find one or more bedbugs, please take the following steps:

- 1. Don't panic** - this does not mean you are the source of the problem or that you are somehow unclean.
- 2. Report the problem** to management immediately.
- 3. Prepare for an invasive inspection** - the pest control company representative will need to look all through your unit, including your bed and box spring, but also your other furniture, closets, drawers, bags, boxes, purses, backpacks, etc. You may need to submit to frequent inspections and must cooperate with the pest control company.
- 4. Prepare for intensive treatment** that may require the removal of infested furniture, installation of bedbug proof mattress and box spring covers can keep you from having to replace your

mattress and box spring and are affordable. Treatment will require a lot of effort on your part, so follow all of the instructions from the pest control company.

5. **Regularly inspect your unit** and continue to follow instructions from the pest control company until they determine the problem is resolved.

It can take weeks or months to successfully eradicate an infestation, so persistence is important.

What not to do

- Don't move your sleeping area, it will only cause the bedbugs to spread.
- If you want to remove an infested item from the unit, it should be wrapped in plastic and immediately taken away so someone else doesn't pick it up and take it home.
- Don't use over-the-counter bedbug treatments as bedbugs have developed immunity to many of the chemicals, and it may drive adults away from your unit to someone else's.
- Don't use exterior bug products inside, it can make you sick.
- Don't use bug bombs. They are largely ineffective at eradicating bedbugs, and can cause them to scatter and spread to other non-infested areas. There is also the risk of explosion if too many bug bombs are set off at one time.
- Don't treat your body with insecticide. Bedbugs feed for only a few minutes then return to their safe harbor, you will only harm yourself.
- Don't try to eradicate bedbugs with "home remedies," they won't work. That includes boric acid, diatomaceous earth, moth balls, peppermint oil, citronella, tee tree oil or lavender.

An ounce of prevention

- Install bedbug-proof mattress and box spring covers on all beds in the unit.
- Put all mattresses on frames off the floor and install bed-leg traps on all frame feet.
- Wash and dry all bedding regularly using the high heat cycle on the dryer for 20 minutes.
- Use hot steam cleaners to treat other affected areas or items.
- Store personal property in plastic totes rather than cardboard boxes.
- Beware of setting purses or backpacks on floors when you are at a hotel, restaurant or a guest at someone's home. Bedbugs have been known to hitchhike home in people's bags.
- Encourage children to leave their blankets, backpacks and stuffed animals at home. If your child has a sleepover, inspect their items when they come home, put all of their clothes, soft toys, stuffed animals or backpacks in the dryer for 20-30 minutes to kill any possible bedbugs.
- Do not bring second-hand furniture into the unit.
- Inspect beds, couches and recliners once a month for signs of bedbugs.
- When traveling, check the bed before taking luggage into the room, place luggage on a raised stand away from direct contact with the wall to prevent bugs from crawling in. Keep clothes, purses, backpacks and bags off the floor. Hang them up or leave them in the tub or shower.
- Do not sit down on public transportation, check office chairs and airplane seats before sitting down.
- When you get home from a trip, immediately wash and dry on high heat all clothing and textiles or put everything into a securely tied plastic bag until you can. Use a steam machine to heat treat your luggage before storing it away.
- Whatever you do, don't ignore the problem, it will only get worse.