

Bed Bug Resurgence – Why?

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- Increased worldwide travel and trade
- Underground economy (Transient workers and their possessions)
- Increase in secondhand merchandise
- Possible changes in bed bug habits
- People do not recognize bed bugs or the signs of their infestation - until recently, most people under 50 had never seen a bed bug
- There are no "magic bullet" insecticides
- The pest control industry is bait-oriented (there are no baits for bed bugs)



Key Facts about Bed Bug Biology and Control

Infestations of common bed bugs are not directly related to sanitation levels. All they need to survive is a hiding place and a human for a blood source. (They will also feed on house pets.) At night, bed bugs seek warm bodies, leaving their hiding places in mattresses, box springs, bed frames, nightstands, curtains, couches and wall voids, and behind baseboards, carpet edges, door and window frames, picture frames, peeling paint and wallpaper. During the 1930's, researchers found that 47% of moving vans sampled in Europe were infested with bed bugs, which demonstrated how the pests could be easily moved to new locations.

Bed bugs do not transmit pathogens to humans. However, there can be a strong allergic reaction to the bite in some individuals and their presence can have a strong psychological impact on residents. In multi-unit buildings, bed bug infestations that are not adequately attended to often spread to neighboring units, making eradication much more difficult.

The vast majority of laypersons could not expect to effectively control even a very small and localized bed bug infestation. Under current conditions, the use of some kind of residual (long lasting), properly labeled insecticide is needed to effectively control bed bugs in the U.S., and any practical control effort could not be carried out without use of such a product. It requires considerable time, technical knowledge, and assistance by occupants or property managers for the most competent and best trained and experienced pest control professionals to effectively eliminate established bed bug infestations. **Occupant compliance and cooperation, especially regarding reducing clutter, making infested spots fully accessible for inspection and treatment is crucial for successful bed bug control.** Under the best of situations, at least two separate visits by professional pest control technician should be expected as a minimum. Thus the cost of technical labor, and related overall cost for control, is often higher than expected. "Alternative" bed bug control methods can supplement the use of residual insecticides, but they are unlikely to be practical as the sole control method, particularly in multi-unit dwellings. *Because of the high cost of professional bed bug control, frustrated householders may purchase insecticides and other chemicals and use them in ineffective and potentially dangerous attempts to eliminate these pests.*

Bed bugs will move as far as 20 feet from their hiding places (and back) during the night. Also, bed bugs can survive without feeding for as long as 1 year. Additionally, bed bugs are great hitchhikers: the bugs and their eggs are easily moved in luggage, bedding, furniture, backpacks and other personal items. And the fact that many people show no reaction to bed bug bites, means that some infestations go undetected and are allowed to expand until someone reactive to the bites presents with the inflammation and swelling that signal the presence of bed bugs.

The common bedbug is a wingless, red-brown, blood-sucking insect that grows up to 7 mm in length and has a lifespan from 4 months up to 1 year. Bedbugs hide in cracks and crevices in beds, wooden furniture, floors, and walls during the daytime and emerge at night to feed on their preferred host, humans



When bed bug infestations occur, the use of high quality mattress and box spring "encasements" will help a control program to be successful. However, high quality encasements that prevent bed bugs from biting through them or entering / exiting through the zippers can cost \$300 or more. Bed bug traps, placed beneath a bed's feet, have also been proven effective, though like any of the various methods of control, they are but one bullet in the arsenal typically required to eradicate these insidious pests.

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