

Bed Bugs - Fact Sheet

Bed Bugs (*Cimex lectularius*) originated in the Middle East and have been recorded in the Mediterranean regions since records began. However they did not reach the UK until the sixteenth century.

Where do they come from?

Bed Bugs can be brought into a property by purchasing infested second hand furniture, beds, mattresses, wardrobes, dressing tables, and even items such as hi-fi units, televisions, pictures, bedding and clothing, all from properties that usually have poor standards of hygiene. It always pays to carry out a thorough inspection of any second hand item before it is purchased.



What do they look like?

Bed Bugs are oval, flat insects measuring **6mm in length**, they are **reddish brown** in colour and their sole food source is **BLOOD**. Bed Bugs cannot fly but can move very well from one area to another. Bed Bugs can digest up to **seven times** their body weight in blood at any one meal, but can also go for prolonged periods without feeding (**over six months**).

Where do they live?

Bed Bugs avoid daylight (nocturnal) as much as possible, so they generally feed at night. Because of this they hide in **cracks and crevices** during the day, for example badly fitting, **skirting boards, door frames, window frames, behind wall paper that has curled, headboards, mattresses**, all of these locations must be within easy reach of their host. The female Bed Bug lays her eggs in the same locations that she uses to hide and live. The eggs when laid are glued into position with cement to hold them firm. **One** female Bed Bug can produce up to **300 eggs in her life**, her average life span being **18 months**. When the eggs hatch they emerge as nymphs, which resemble the adults in shape and share many of their habits.

Where two bedrooms adjoin as in hostels and boarding houses it is possible for Bed Bugs to travel from one room to another and cause new infestations especially in badly constructed properties.

Do they cause any harm?

Bed Bugs bite humans and live off their blood. Bites will be evident in the morning after a night's sleep. Bites can be found on the face, neck and shoulder area and specks of blood may be evident on the pillows where the Bed Bug has dripped blood on its way back to its hiding place.

How can I get rid of them?

Treatment of Bed Bug infestations needs to be carried out by **professionals** to gain total eradication so any treatment must be left to the experts. Therefore professional advice should be sought as soon as any bed bugs become evident. **The City Council's Pest Control Service can provide treatments for Bed Bugs.**

For further information and advice please contact

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