

## WHAT ARE BED BUGS AND WHAT DO THEY LOOK LIKE?



Bed bugs (*Cimex lectularius*) are small, flat, reddish-brown, wingless insects that grow to 5-7 mm long. They are visible to the naked eye.

Females lay their eggs in cracks and crevices. The eggs are white and about 1 mm long, with a sticky coating.

### How can I tell if I have bed bugs?

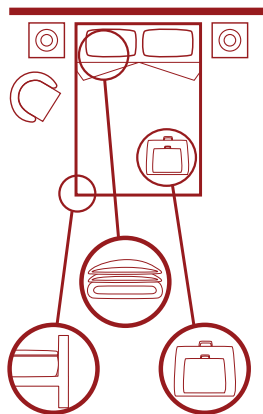
Bed bugs don't move fast and prefer to live close to their food supply, so look for them in areas where bites have occurred. Look for blood spots on sheets, pillows and linen (light coloured sheets may assist detection).

Bed bugs hide in seams and buttons on mattresses as well as around bedsprings, in cracks in the bed frame or headboard, in upholstered furniture, behind picture frames, behind loose wallpaper, along baseboards and mouldings and around windows and door frames.

#### Look for:

- Bites on your guests.
- Blood spots on sheets, pillows and linen (light coloured sheets may assist detection).
- Bugs or bug faeces visible on or around a bed's mattress and frame.
- Live bugs and their shed skins.
- Eggs and egg cases attached to mattresses, beds, skirting boards, curtains, picture frames, etc.

Pay extra attention to all dark hiding places such as cracks and gaps.



Bed bug sheddings



Bed bug stains



Bed bug eggs

## WHERE CAN I GO FOR MORE INFORMATION?

visit: [www.hsph.harvard.edu/bedbugs](http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/bedbugs)  
or [www.bedbug.org.au](http://www.bedbug.org.au)

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# ABOUT BED BUGS IN NEW ZEALAND

INFORMATION FOR  
ACCOMMODATION PROVIDERS

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT BED BUGS IN NEW ZEALAND

Bed bugs are a problem for accommodation providers both in New Zealand and world wide. Increased international travel means bed bugs are being spread via clothing and luggage carried by a wide range of people.

A survey undertaken in 2005 by the Crown Research Institute Crop & Food Research found that more information was needed by those in the sector about bed bugs and their management.

This leaflet will help you identify bed bugs and it provides guidance on how to deal with them.

### HOW DO BED BUGS SPREAD?

Bed bugs are spread mainly in clothing and luggage. They are also found on beds, in bedding materials, on furniture and in laundry.



**Bed bugs are found in a wide range of visitor accommodation.**

**Their presence or absence has nothing to do with hygiene.**

## WILL BED BUGS BITE MY GUESTS?



Bed bug bite on skin

Yes. Bed bugs mostly bite during the night. Bites can be painless and undetectable, but some people are sensitive to them, with itchy welts appearing that may remain irritated and inflamed for weeks. People may react to a bite two or three days after they have been bitten. Therefore, the bites may or may not have occurred on your property. You might consider informing previous properties where the guest has stayed. Bed bugs are not known to carry disease, but bites sometimes become infected.

### HOW DO I GET RID OF BED BUGS?

It is important to physically remove the insects.

- Hot laundering of all bed linen is recommended.
- Frequently vacuum and brush mattress seams, picture frames, heating air ducts, carpets, cracks and gaps in the floor, and any furniture in the room. This will reduce the problem but not eliminate it.
- After vacuuming either hot wash the vacuum bag or dispose of it safely.
- Contact a **reputable pest control agency that has experience dealing with bed bugs** (details can be found in the Yellow Pages).

#### Steam cleaning

A low-pressure steam cleaner that produces a 'dry' vapour of 70°C plus is an effective method of killing bed bugs once they have been located.

#### Reduce available hiding places

Seal cracks in your bed frames, headboards, walls, floors, door frames and window frames, and remove loose wallpaper.

#### Careful use of insecticide sprays or bombs

Do not solely rely on chemicals for the control of bed bugs, this contributes to them becoming resistant to many insecticides. The following precautions should always be taken when using insecticides:

## WHAT SHOULD I SAY TO MY GUESTS IF THEY ARE BITTEN?

- Advise guests about the cause of the bite in a calm and matter-of-fact manner. A sympathetic approach and the offer of a refund may help.
- Bites can be treated like other insect bites. The use of an antihistamine cream or calamine lotion may soothe itching. Washing the bites and resisting the urge to scratch will reduce the possibility of infection.
- Ask your guests to hot-wash all their clothing and to carefully examine the corners and seams of their luggage to check for infestation and to prevent future infestation of another room or establishment. Washing powder and money for washing and drying could be offered to the guest.
- Your staff should know how to detect bed bugs and what is being done by your business to counteract them.

- Minimise the number of insecticide applications by physically removing the insects and cleaning where possible.
- Make sure the insecticide product you choose is registered in New Zealand for the specific control of bed bugs (check the container for details).
- Insecticides containing carbamates and organophosphates are most effective against bed bugs but should be applied by professional pest control companies. Off-the-shelf products claiming to kill bed bugs may be ineffective.
- Before using insecticides, always read, follow and understand all label directions and precautions.
- Always use the product at the recommended rate on the label.
- To reduce the chance of the bugs developing a resistance, do not use insecticides of the same type repeatedly.
- Always check the insecticide label to see whether it can be used on mattresses or bedding. If allowed, mattresses should be spot-treated, not soaked, only at tufts, folds, buttons and seams. Let the mattress dry thoroughly for the time indicated on the label before putting it back on the bed.
- Do not treat infant bedding and 'cots'.
- Keep insecticides in the original container and out of reach of children and pets.
- Consider hiring a professional pest control company to help manage your pest problem.