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## Bedbugs (*Cimex lectularius*)

FOR MORE INFORMATION,  
CONTACT INFECTION CONTROL  
AT 416.762.7316, EXT. 2238.

*We make it possible.*

# Preventing bedbug infestations

## WHAT ARE BEDBUGS?

A **BEDBUG** is a fast-moving, nocturnal insect that feeds on blood. They are dark red or brown in colour, roughly the size of a grain of rice and most active during night hours.

In the last decade, there has been an 80% increase in bedbug extermination calls as bedbug infestations have become more common.

## CAN I GET SICK FROM BEDBUGS?

There is no known infectious disease transmitted by bedbug bites. Scratching the bitten area can lead to skin infection.

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF A BEDBUG BITE?

Bedbug bites are typically itchy, red welts that appear in a linear pattern of three on the skin.

Reactions can take up to 14 days to appear.

## WHERE CAN BEDBUGS BE FOUND?

Bedbugs can most commonly be found in the following places:

- Mattresses, bed seams and box springs
- Headboards and frames
- Ceilings and fixtures
- Floorboards and carpets
- Molding
- Cracks and crevices.

## HOW TO TREAT INFESTATION AT HOME

If you think you might have bedbugs at home, consult with your local health department or a professional pest control operator for confirmation.

- Vacuum your mattress and encase it in a sealable mattress cover to prevent entry of bedbugs
- Eliminate clutter around the home by tidying bedrooms and living areas, and organizing belongings
- Wash items in water at temperatures of at least 50° C and dry at a high heat
- Steam clean items that can tolerate temperatures between 50° and 90° C for at least two minutes.

## HOW TO PREVENT A BEDBUG INFESTATION

The following are some useful practices that will prevent bedbug infestation:

- When travelling, keep luggage off the floor and away from the bed
- Use a sealed garbage bag to protect your luggage when staying in hotels
- Keep clothing in sealed bags until it can be washed
- Use a flashlight to illuminate dark spaces when searching for bedbugs—these areas are prime hiding spots for bedbugs
- Take caution when bringing home used furniture or clothes, and make sure to inspect used items carefully for rust-coloured spots, which are a warning sign.

## ALWAYS REMEMBER

Abandoning a room that has bedbugs will not get rid of the problem. Bedbugs can live for up to a year and will travel great distances to find a meal.

Bedbugs infest a number of areas, so make sure you properly clean or discard any surface or object (in addition to furniture and bedding) that contains bedbugs.