



Preventing Bed Bugs



Overview

Bed bugs are tiny parasites. They feed on the blood of people and pets. If they get into your home, they live in your bed and furnishings. At night, they crawl onto your skin and bite you, which can leave lots of red, itchy bumps. Once in your home, bed bugs can be very hard to get rid of. Here's how to protect yourself.

Check your home

First, check your home. Bed bugs are reddish-brown. They can grow to the size of an apple seed. Look for bed bugs, tiny eggs, shed skins and small dark stains in the seams, folds and edges of your mattress. Check the box spring and bed frame. Check furniture and anything you have around your bed. And check your sheets and pajamas for blood spots.

Be careful when you travel

Next, be careful when you travel. When you sleep away from home, put your luggage on a luggage rack away from the wall. Or, put it in the bathtub. Check the bed and the room carefully. If you see signs of bed bugs, tell your host right away. When you get home, wash travel clothes separately from other laundry. Vacuum your luggage. Empty the vacuum outside into a plastic bag, seal it, and throw it in the outside bin.

Act fast

Finally, if you do find bed bugs in your home, act fast. Call a pest control expert. Don't try to get rid of them yourself, because you can spread them around your home.