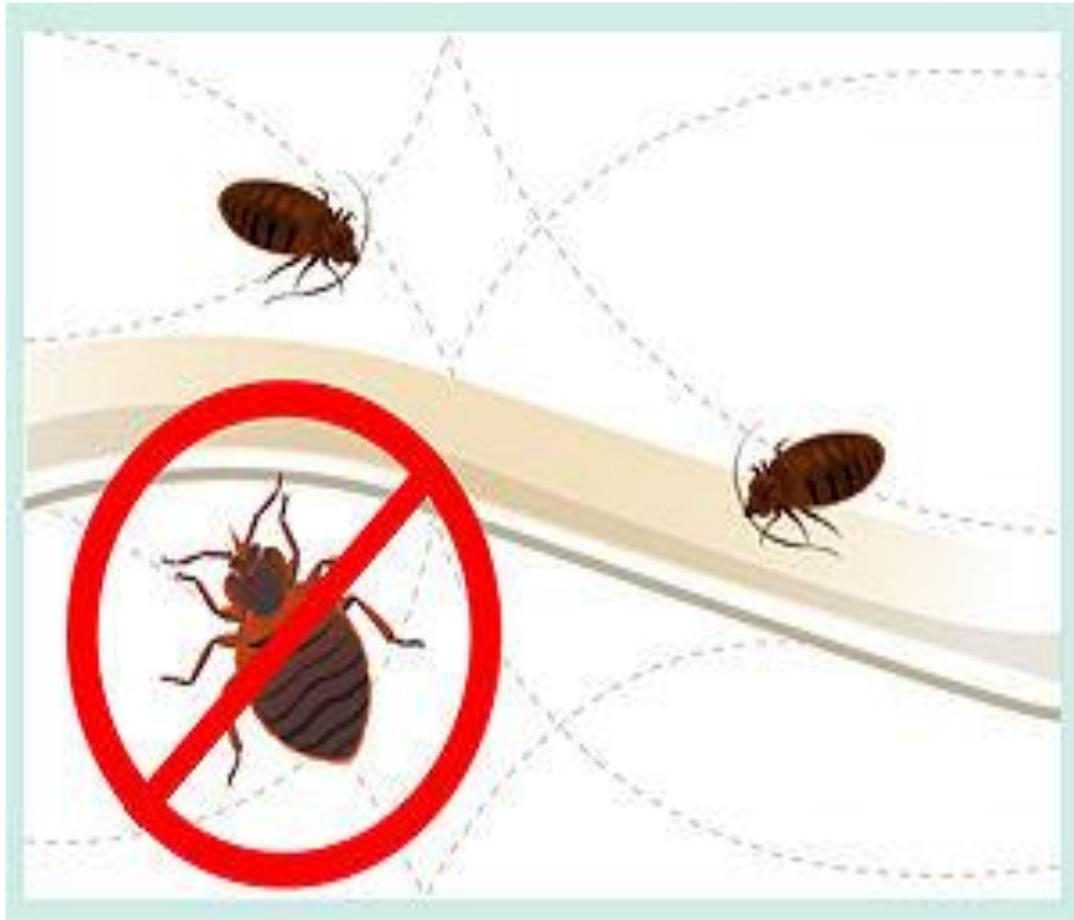


JACKSON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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How to Get Rid of Bed Bugs

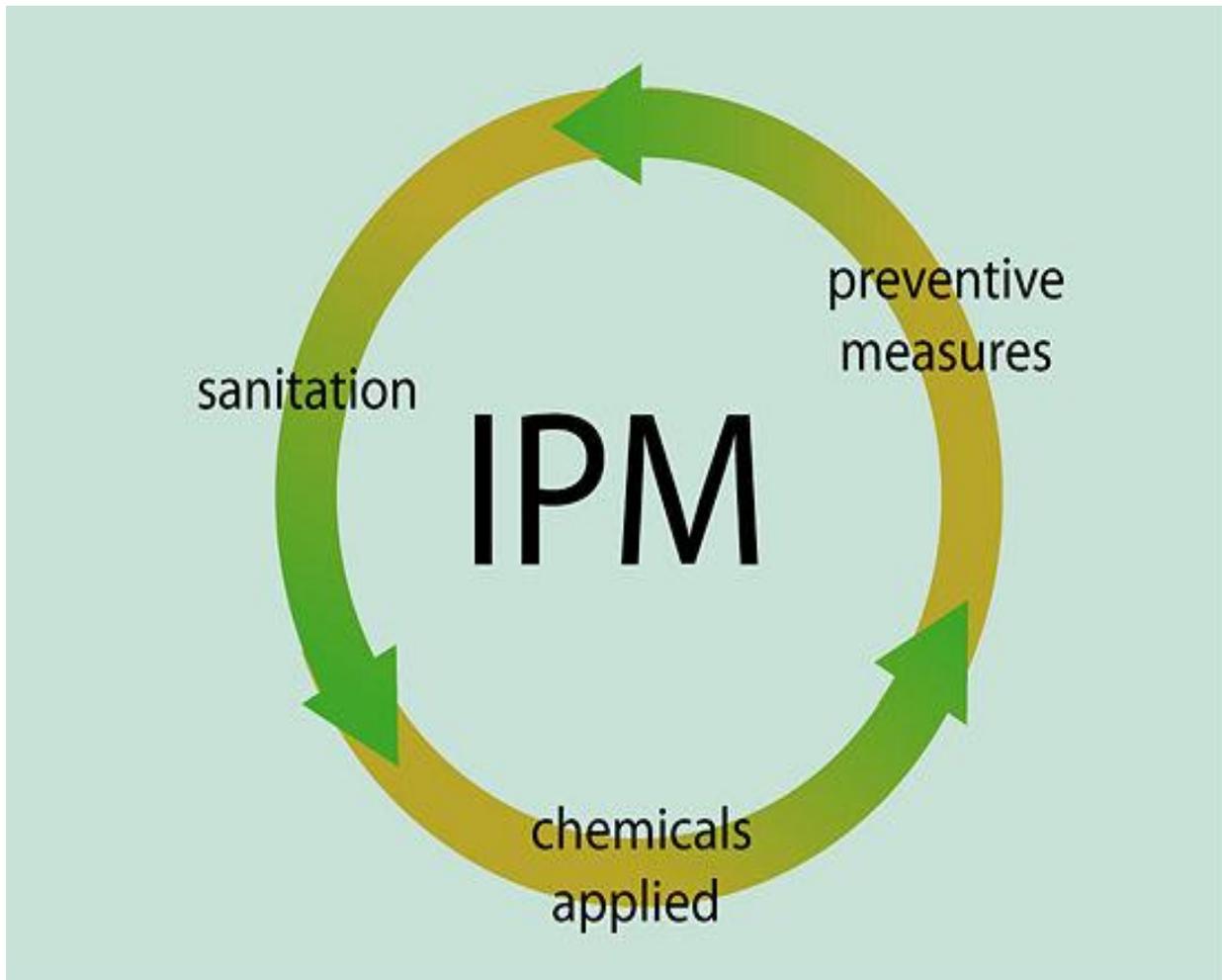


Bed bugs were once a common public health pest worldwide, declining in incidence through the mid 20th century. However, bed bugs have undergone a dramatic resurgence and there are worldwide reports of increasing numbers of infestations. Bed bugs are one of the great travelers of the world and are readily transported via luggage, clothing, bedding and furniture. Read on to find out how to get rid of bed bugs in your own home.

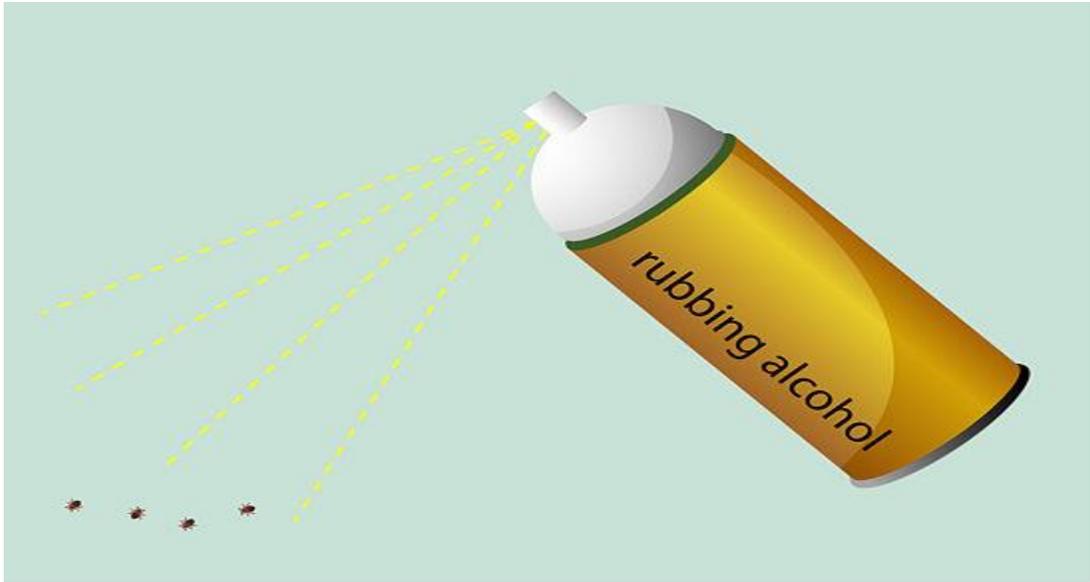
Disclaimer: *The Jackson County Health Department supplies this information as suggested ways to reduce or eliminate bed bugs in your home. There is no guarantee for success in all cases. If you have a bed bug problem and rent your home or apartment, it is recommended to contact your landlord for help with the treatment. If you live in your own home we strongly urge you to contact a professional pest control firm before applying any pesticides for bed bug control.*

Steps for the Treatment and Control of Bed Bugs

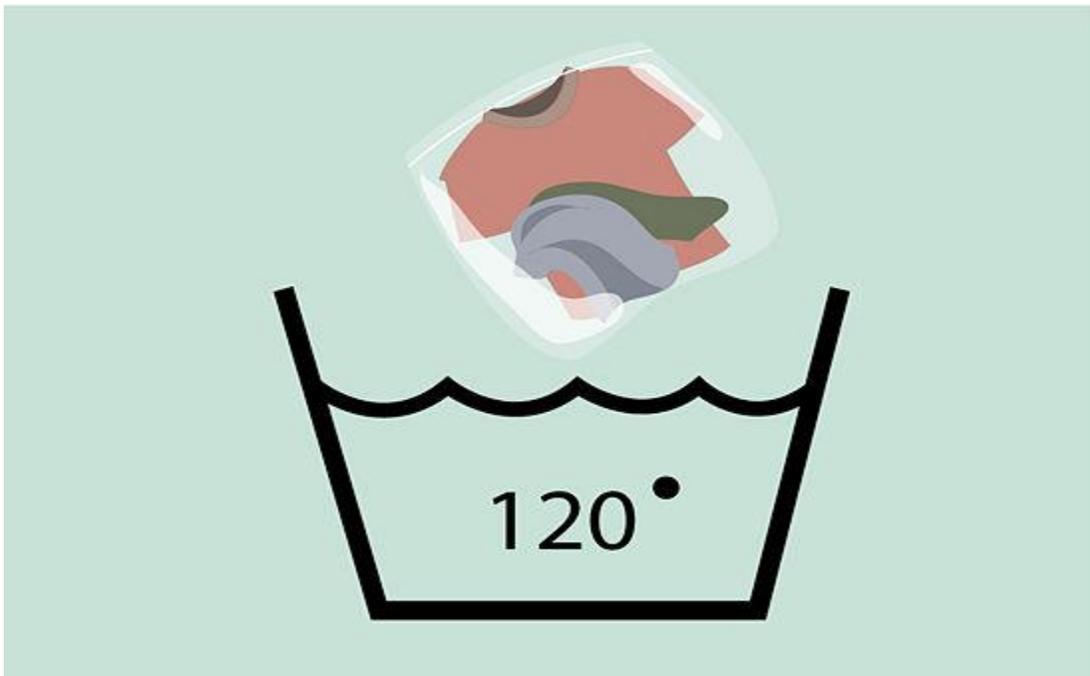
Follow an **integrated pest management (IPM)** approach. This involves multiple tactics such as preventive measures, sanitation and chemicals applied to targeted sites.



Spray bed bugs with rubbing alcohol. This kills them on the spot. Use the rubbing alcohol and a dish brush to kill the visible eggs, then call an exterminator.



Bag and launder (120°F minimum) affected items. Smaller items that cannot be laundered can sometimes be de-infested by heating. Individual items, for example, can be wrapped in plastic and placed in a hot, sunny location for at least a few days (the 120°F minimum target temperature should be monitored in the centermost location with a thermometer). Bedbugs also succumb to cold temperatures below freezing, but the chilling period must be maintained for at least two weeks. Attempts to rid an entire home or apartment of bed bugs by raising or lowering the thermostat will be entirely unsuccessful.



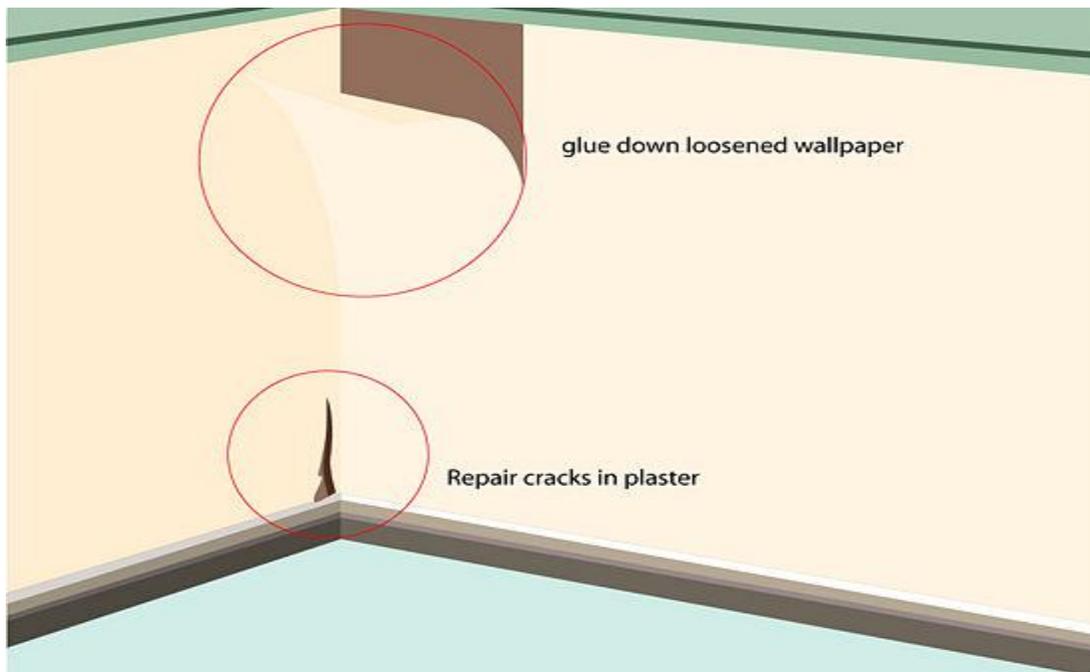
Point steam on them. You may get a simple device capable of generating steam at your local hardware store. Steam should kill all bedbugs and the eggs. Thoroughly spray steam at all corners and seams.



Vacuum your house. This will remove bugs and eggs from mattresses, carpet, walls and other surfaces. Pay particular attention to seams, tufts and edges of mattresses and box springs, and the perimeter edge of wall-to-wall carpets. Afterward, dispose of the vacuum contents in a sealed trash bag. Steam cleaning of carpets is also helpful for killing bugs and eggs that vacuuming may have missed.



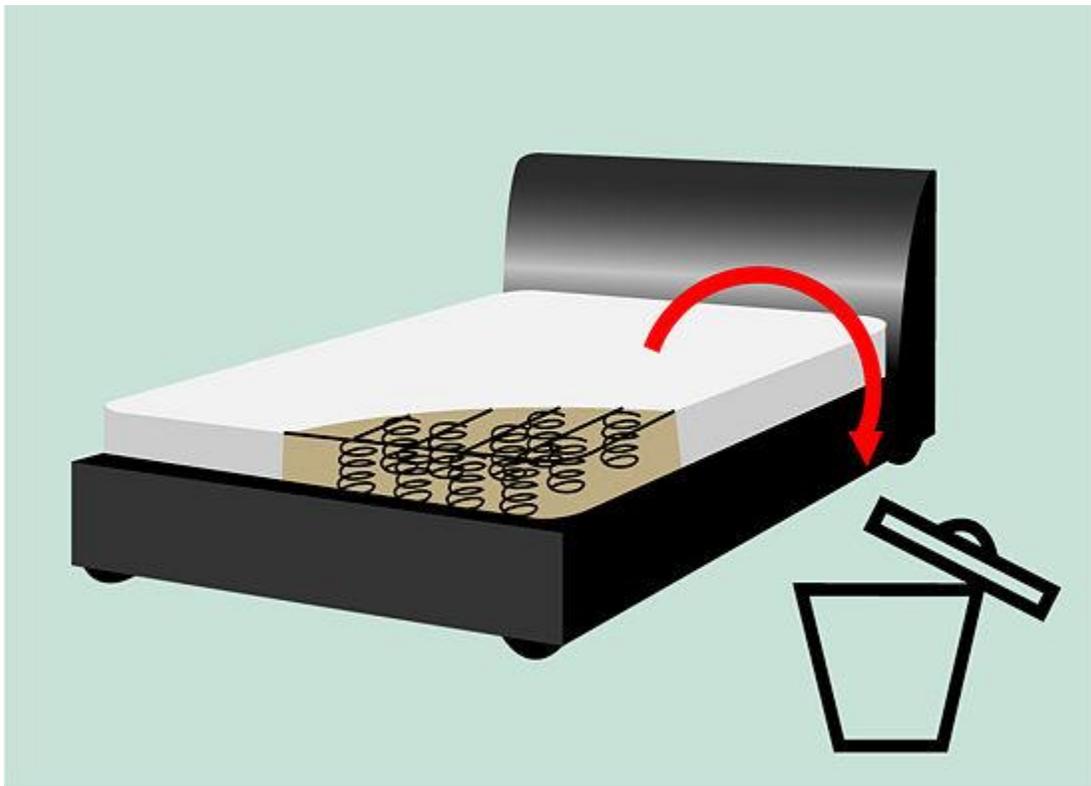
Repair cracks in plaster and glue down loosened wallpaper to eliminate bed bug harborage sites. Remove and destroy wild animal roosts and bird nests when possible.



Enlist the services of a professional pest control firm. Experienced companies know where to look for bed bugs, and have an assortment of management tools at their disposal. Owners and occupants will need to assist the professional in important ways. Allowing access for inspection and treatment is essential and excess clutter should be removed.



Discard affected items. In some cases, infested mattresses and box springs will need to be discarded.



Apply silica gel. Use a small handhold steam cleaner to steam your bed including frame, bed boards, mattress and let it dry. Grind up some crystal silica gel and apply it all over in your bed room. Put some on your mattress, around the bed and along the wall. The fine silica gel stuck to the bug cannot be shaken off, causing it to dehydrate and die.^[1] Please be careful when using Silica Gel! If you inhale enough its highly toxic. Your best bet for natural bed bug control would be to use a natural dehydrating substance called Diatomaceous Earth. Make sure you ask for the "Food Grade" variation! Diatomaceous Earth also has the same effect as Silica Gel but is safe and exposure to it is not dangerous for your children and pets!^[2]



- If you have a cat, change the cat litter (crystal silica gel) every 5 days so the newly hatched eggs will dehydrate too. Repeat for 5 weeks.

An Alternative Method to Immediately Solve Bed Bug Problem

Make a bed sized bed bug trap by fabric and double side sticky tape around 4 edges of the trap as shown in the Figure. You must use a patent pending tape which is sticky enough to trap bed bugs. You may evaluate the adhesiveness by dropping an ant onto the tape. The tape is inside of the fabric trap at left, right, and foot sides, and is outside of the fabric trap at head side. Leave 1 inch space between mattress and headboard, and 1 inch space between headboard and wall.



Apply the tape to headboard and ceiling. Bed bugs can't crawl from headboard or fall from ceiling to bed.

Heat bedding sheet, pillows, and blanket in a laundry dryer. Now your bed has the similar function as a bathtub to seal bed bugs. Many people have immediately stopped bed bug bites by sleeping in a bathtub, which provides 100% confidence for you to stop bed bug bites immediately by this innovative method.

Only heat the clothing you are going to wear in a dryer. Store them in sealed plastic bags or hang them in closet bars which are protected by sticky tape at both ends. Catch a least 10 bed bugs into a glass jar without cap. They should not be dormant at room temperatures and should starve in 3 months. When you see all of them are dead, you have completely solved bed bug problem. Note: Bed bugs in dormant at low temperature without smell of sleeping people may live for 1 year without food.

Protect a sofa with sofa encasement or don't sit on sofa for 3 months.

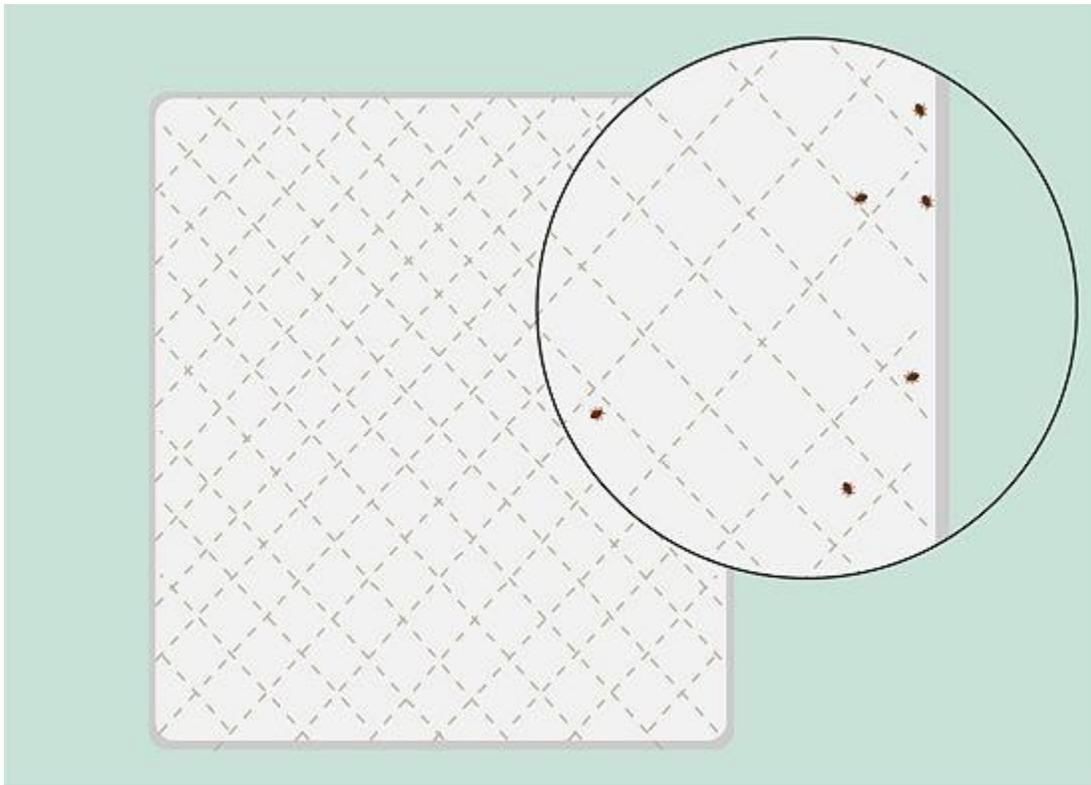
Apply sticky tape to legs of chairs and tables. As an optional effort, apply sticky tape to low edge of shoes which you wear at home only.

Bed bugs will perform this step for you. They will be attracted by smell of people and actively seek attacking routes and quickly consume their energy every night. They should starve within 3 months. It is not important how long it will take to starve the last bug because you will not receive any bites or perform extra daily work after you build the sticky barriers.

Celebrate having solved bed bug problem after 24 hours you build the sticky barriers. If you don't receive any bites in the past 24 hours, you should not receive any bites in the following weeks because bed bug population is the highest in the past 24 hours. If chemical spray is the major method, you may wait for weeks to know whether the killing speed is faster than the egg laying speed.

Finding Bed Bugs

Dismantle the bed and stand the components on end. Things to look for are the bugs themselves and the light-brown, molted skins of the nymphs. Dark spots of dried bed bug excrement are often present along mattress seams or wherever the bugs have resided. Oftentimes, the gauze fabric underlying the box spring must be removed to gain access for inspection and possible treatment. Cracks and crevices of bed frames should be examined, especially if the frame is wood (bed bugs have an affinity for wood and fabric more so than metal or plastic).



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- Successful treatment of mattresses and box springs is difficult and infested components may ultimately need to be discarded.
 - Bed bugs also hide among items stored underneath beds.
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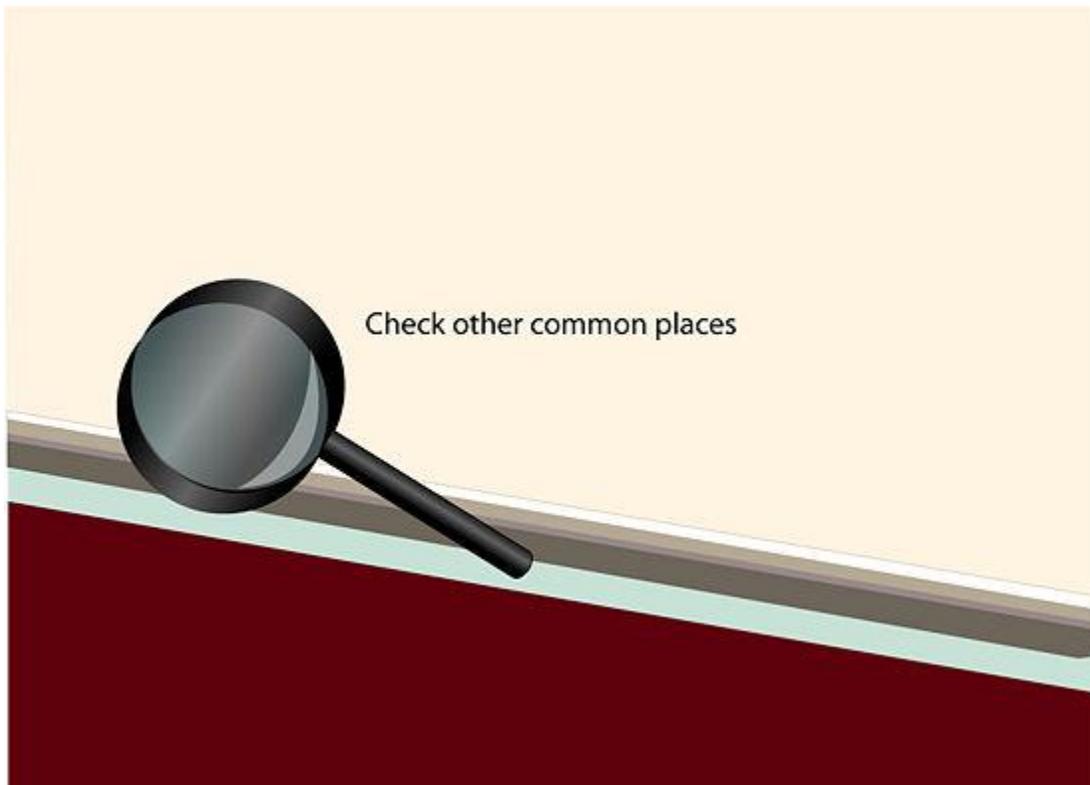
Empty nightstands and dressers. Examine them inside and out, then tip them over to inspect the woodwork underneath. Oftentimes, the bugs will be hiding in cracks, corners and recesses.



Check upholstered chairs and sofas. Pay close attention to the seams, tufts, skirts and crevices beneath cushions. Sofas can be major bed bug hotspots when used for sleeping.



Check other common places. These include along and under the edge of wall-to-wall carpeting (especially behind beds and furniture), cracks in wood molding and ceiling-wall junctures. Bed bugs tend to congregate in certain areas, but it is common to find an individual or some eggs scattered here and there.



Use a flashlight. Inspectors sometimes also inject a pyrethrum-based "flushing agent" into crevices to help reveal where bugs may be hiding.



Prevent Bed Bugs From Entering

Be wary of acquiring secondhand beds, bedding, and furniture. At a minimum, such items should be examined closely before being brought into the home.



Examine beds and headboards for signs of bed bugs when traveling. #Elevate your luggage off the floor.



Tips

- If disposal isn't an option, encasing the mattress and box spring will be helpful if bugs are still present (allergy supply companies sell zippered bed encasements for dust mite prevention). Vacuuming and brushing will further help to remove bugs and eggs from mattresses and box springs that cannot be discarded. Some pest control firms also treat beds with portable steam machines. The technique is useful, but does not kill bugs or eggs that are hidden inside the box spring or mattress.
- Use a bed frame to elevate your mattress and box spring off the ground and put the legs in containers with any type of oil. This will help keep them from climbing in and out of your bed. Store away any bed skirts. Keep sheets and blankets from hanging from the bed to the ground until the infestation is gone.
- A thorough treatment of a home, hotel or apartment may take anywhere from several hours to several days.
- No insecticides are labeled for use on bedding or linens. These items should be dry cleaned or laundered in hot water and dried using the "hot" setting. Use certain labeled insecticides on the seams or folds of the mattress. Do not spray insecticides on the flat surface of the mattress, where you lay down.
- There are restrictions on how beds can be treated with pesticides. Some pest control firms treat seams, tufts, and crevices of bed components, but they will not spray the mattress surface, bed sheets, blankets, or clothing. For these reasons, pest control firms often recommend that infested beds be discarded.
- Pest control professionals treat using a variety of low-odor sprays, dusts, and aerosols.
- Bed bugs can survive without a source of food for over 2 years. Some type of action needs to take place to end the infestation.
- Majority of bugs can be found either in the mattress, or in the headboard.
- When buying a bedbug sheet, inspect carefully what the bed dimensions are, since a lot of mattresses outside the states have custom sizes that differ from the standard.

Warnings

- Bed bugs can live a year or longer without food (blood) and thus stay in their hiding places.
- Bed bugs can hide in extremely small cracks and crevices making it difficult to locate breeding sites.
- Bed bugs are rarely seen in daylight. They emerge from their hiding spots at night.
- Bed bug females lay about 300 eggs and they hatch in 10 days.
- Bed bugs can travel long distances and survive in suitcases, clothing, vehicles, aircrafts, cruise ships and other modes of transportation.
- After repeated bedbug bites, a person's skin may become sensitized to the saliva of the bedbug, and subsequent bites may cause an allergic response, resulting in itching and inflammation. It is important not to scratch the red, itchy spots, as they can become infected. If you think you may have been bitten by bedbugs, talk to your doctor. He may prescribe antibiotic or antiseptic creams to prevent infection and corticosteroids and antihistamines to treat allergic reactions.