

If You Get Bed Bugs

The first step in controlling a pest is to know the pest. Identifying bed bugs involves collecting at least one specimen from the suspected infestation and having it examined by an entomologist, pest management professional or other qualified individual. **The presence of bed bugs should be confirmed before any other steps are taken.**

GUIDELINES

- First, confirm that you have bed bugs by having specimens identified by an entomologist or pest management professional.
- **Avoid using aerosol “foggers.”** They do not effectively control bed bugs and can present a fire or explosion hazard. Also avoid using quantities of flammable liquids such as rubbing (isopropyl) alcohol. Do not use “roach powder” dusts containing ortho boric acid or borates – they are effective against cockroaches, but not bed bugs. Most over-the-counter pesticides will kill bed bugs only when directly applied to the bugs, and do not provide long-lasting control. If you must apply pesticides, always READ AND FOLLOW LABEL DIRECTIONS.
- Contact a pest management professional. Most bed bug infestations are not do-it-yourself projects. You may want to contact more than one company to provide estimates for managing the infestation. It’s best to be familiar with the basics of bed bugs and their control before you speak with pest control company representatives, so you can make an informed decision on which to choose. For tips on selecting a pest control company see our fact sheet at: <http://www.idph.state.il.us/envhealth/pcpestcntrl.htm>
- Prepare for treatment by following your pest management professional’s suggestions, which may include eliminating clutter (unused/unwanted items), laundering, installing encasements (zippered covers) on mattresses and box springs, and using traps such as the Climbup™ on bed legs. If you cannot obtain traps, try wrapping carpet tape or duct tape (sticky side out) around bed legs to trap bed bugs.
- It is usually *not* necessary to discard mattresses, box springs, bed frames and other items. You can isolate your bed from bed bugs by installing traps beneath bed legs and keeping the bed and covers from touching the walls and floor. Make sure the bed is not in contact with things stored under it.
- Note that while vacuuming can remove some bed bugs, their eggs are sticky and adhere to surfaces, making them difficult to pick up. If you choose to vacuum, do it carefully so the vacuum cleaner doesn’t spread the bed bugs. Empty vacuum bags and canisters into

plastic bags that seal tightly, preventing the bugs from escaping, and check the vacuum's brushes and attachments for bed bugs immediately after vacuuming.

- To eliminate as many bed bug hiding places as possible, you can use caulk or other materials to seal cracks and gaps around pipes, vents, floor registers and light fixtures, as well as around phone, cable and electrical outlets.
- Expect follow-up inspections and treatments about every two weeks after the initial treatment. Inspection and treatment should continue at least until no bites or bed bugs are seen for a two-month period.