



## Bed Bugs

### What do they look like?

- Mature bed bugs are 4-5 mm long, rusty red/brown to mahogany coloured, oval, wingless insects. Their bodies are flattened, with well-developed antennae and small compound eyes. As the eggs hatch out the nymphs, that emerge are a miniature of the adult and may not be as readily seen.
- After feeding, they become swollen, longer and dark red to dark brown in colour.

### Facts about bed bugs

- Bed bugs are bloodsucking parasites of man and also feed on chickens, bats and some domestic animals.
- A bed bug bite tends to be painless. It is their saliva that can cause irritation, swelling and redness.
- They feed at night or at any time if the room is dark they are attracted to the host by detecting heat and carbon dioxide from the persons breath.
- They live in mattresses, and bed frames, soft furnishing, and under wallpaper behind picture frames; in cracks and crevices near to beds, undersides of windows, door casings and loose mouldings etc.
- Females lay eggs, which are white and about 1 mm long, on rough surfaces such as wood or paper or in cracks and crevices but not on people. Bedbugs do not live on people but simply attach themselves to the host to feed and then return to the area where they are living.
- A bed bugs entire life cycle can take between 5 weeks to 4 months, depending upon the temperature and availability of food.
- They do leave signs that they are present, such as black or brown spots of dried blood often visible on the bed sheets and pillow cases, closer examination may reveal eggs and cast skins on the surfaces where the bugs rest.

## **How do they get into properties?**

Most frequently they are brought in on second hand furniture, but the increase in travel throughout the world and the change from beach holidays to “adventure” type holidays staying in various types of accommodation which may have no pest control in operation has increased the number of bed bug infestations in this country.

## **What action should you take.**

Because bedbugs can be difficult to eradicate it is **not** recommended that you attempt to treat an infestation yourself. However keeping premises spotlessly clean with regular vacuuming will help to remove any eggs. Adult bedbugs can remain alive for many months without feeding and therefore may survive even when a property is unoccupied.

## **How can the Council Help?**

- Highly trained officers from the Pest Control section can undertake a treatment for you, there is a charge for this service (See the web link for prices).
- The officer may advise you to Strip beds and put the bedding in a tightly secured plastic bag, and that all bedding should be hot washed before being returned to a treated room.
- To effect a treatment officer may need access to all areas of an affected room/s this may include drawers and cupboards and in some cases the removal of the lining at the base of the bed, the officer will advise you of what you need to do in your particular circumstance. If you need to move an item for us to gain access, do not take it out of the room as you could infest another area. Do not put items that have not been washed or treated in to a treated room as it could cause re-infestation.
- He will advise you of the treatment and what the likely outcome will be he will leave you a safety sheet providing information about the insecticide that he has used.
- If you see a bed bug after treatment, it does not mean it has not worked. They may have hatched after the treatment and will be killed off by the pesticide once they come into contact with it.

### **How to contact us**

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