

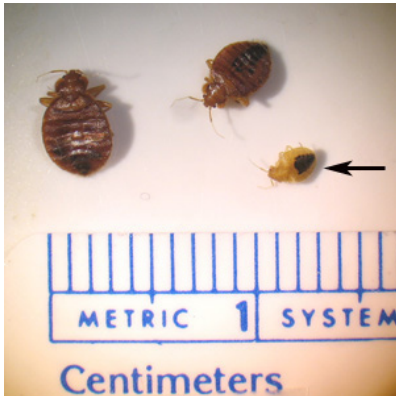
Bed Bug Bites

What are bed bugs?

Bed bugs are insects. Adult bed bugs have an oval-shaped body with no wings. They are shaped like an apple seed. Before feeding, adults are six to 10 mm long (¼ inch), flat and brown. After feeding, they turn dark red and become bloated. Immature bed bugs are shaped like adults, but they are yellow-white in colour.

Bed bug eggs are whitish and are one mm long (½ inch) or the size of a pinhead. The eggs have a sticky coating, and clusters can be found in cracks and crevices. They usually hatch in six to 17 days. Bed bugs have a one-year life span, during which a female can lay 200 to 400 eggs depending on temperature and food supply.

Bed bugs prefer to feed on human blood, but they will bite other animals. They bite at night and will bite all over a person, especially the face, neck, upper body, arms and hands. Bites often occur in a line of three or “breakfast, lunch and dinner.”



Courtesy of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Courtesy of City of Winnipeg

What are the symptoms of bed bug bites?

Bed bugs are not known to transmit disease, but they are an unpleasant pest with which to deal. Individual responses to bites and bed bug saliva will vary. The bite may not be noticeable or look like a mosquito or flea bite or other skin conditions. Bites can be red and itchy, either flat or raised bumps. In some people, bites can cause a localized allergic reaction and large itchy welts. Scratching a bite can cause an infection. In people with a high sensitivity to bed bug saliva, they may develop a lump filled with blood or fluid.

Bed bug bites usually do not require any medical treatment. Keep the skin clean and try not to scratch. If bites are very itchy or infected, your family doctor may prescribe medicine to relieve itchiness or treat secondary skin infections.



Courtesy of Agence de la santé