



# DISCOVERY DOGS

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## CANINE BED BUG DETECTION

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## BED BUG FACT SHEET

*Printer friendly for speed and ink conservation.*

### **Bed bugs do not jump or fly.**

The only way for bed bugs to move around locally is by crawling. They can not jump or fly.

### **Bed bugs are hitchhikers.**

Bed bugs move from place to place by 'hitching' rides. This may be accomplished via suitcases, carry bags (gym, laptop or otherwise), clothing, furniture and anything else that moves from place to place. Inclusive is human traffic, bed bugs are largely dependent on us, to get from place to place.

### **Bite reactions.**

Not all people have reactions to bed bug bites. It is possible to get bitten and not know it. The reaction of a bed bug bite is due to the anesthetic and blood thinning agents in their saliva. There isn't a venom being injected into the site of a bite as in a bee sting. Bed bug bites can and will vary from person to person. People with strong reactions to bites will show different results over the days following the site of a bite.

### **Bed bug feeding.**

Bed bugs do not have to feed every day, or even every week for that matter. They can lay dormant in a waiting state for long periods of time. Studies have shown that bed bugs can survive over 400 days under optimal temperature and environment conditions. A bed bug that hasn't fed will have a flat appearance, only several sheets of paper thick. A fed bed bug will appear more 'bubbled' up.

### **Mattress encasements.**

Encasements DO NOT prevent bed bugs from infesting a bed. They do however preserve a mattress and disable a larger quantity of habitat potentials for bed bugs. Encasements keep anything that is inside a mattress or boxspring, in, and anything that is outside, out. This simply means that in the event of an infestation you will most likely not be discarding your mattress and boxspring, but the encasement instead. The material and zipper of mattress encasements is important for the encasement to be effective. When purchasing an encasement cover(s) pay attention to brand and material construction of the encasement. Most popular brands will indicate that their material and zippers have passed proper tests for preventing the passing of bed bugs through them.

### **Interceptors.**

Interceptors are plastic or other smooth surface cups that are placed under the legs of beds and furniture. The outside surface of the interceptor is most often unpolished and a climbable surface, while the inside is smooth. Bed bugs can not climb many smooth surfaces therefore the basic working theory of an interceptor is that a bed bug can climb into it but cannot climb back out. The strategy of the interceptor is to stop bed bugs from climbing up the legs of furniture or bedding, however it will not stop them if they are already present in the furniture or bedding. Remember when using interceptors effectively your bed or furniture should not be touching the wall or any other conduit for a bed bug to move across.

### **Temperature.**

Bed bugs can survive cold temperatures fairly well. In fact it would take a duration of time at extremely cold/freezing temperatures to kill a bed bug. On the other hand, they cannot survive high heat. At about 113-115 degrees Fahrenheit bed bugs die. The safety in this fact is also based on the duration of time such temperatures are reached. A good example is the case of a clothing dryer. In the case of using a clothes dryer to kill bed bugs on clothing, one should utilize a high heat setting for at least 30 minutes. Note also that it is more important to use a clothes dryer, before a washer, for maximum effectiveness. Water boils at 212 degrees Fahrenheit, therefore steam is an effective killer if direct contact is made to bed bugs or their eggs.



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#### **Bed bug eggs / bed bug waste / shed skins.**

Bed bug eggs are tiny and not easy to see. Eggs are 'glued' to surfaces that bed bugs are infesting. A vacuum cannot be considered 100% effective to remove bed bug eggs. Eggs appear cylindrical in shape and measure approximately 1/32 of an inch.

The waste materials of bed bugs appear as dark, nearly black in color, consisting of dots and smears. Almost ink-like in appearance, fecal waste is basically the product of digested blood. Waste is "flat" against the surface it is on, similar to ink. Fecal waste can be obvious to see in strong infestations, and at other times much more difficult to find. If bed bugs are feeding, there will be waste.

As a bed bug matures it will shed its skin several times along its life cycle. Shed skins appear very frail and can easily be crushed or vacuumed. Naturally the shed skin of a bed bug will indicate some past or present presence of a possible infestation.

#### **Bed bugs and diseases.**

To date there are no known abilities of bed bugs to transfer human pathogens. This means that you cannot acquire an illness from a bed bug in the fashion that you could from other insects such as mosquitos or ticks. Recent studies have indicated however, that bed bugs can carry bacteria which attaches itself to their bodies similar to the type of bacteria found on handles of shopping carts, subway/bus seats and steering wheels. Some of these bacteria types have been found to be drug resistant. Further research is yet to appear in the scientific community.

#### **Body heat and carbon dioxide / night time bites.**

Bed bugs are 'activated' by heat from our bodies and carbon dioxide (we exhale carbon dioxide). This is one of the reasons that bed bug activity is more popular at night as we are laying still and our bodies are expressing the exact ingredients that bed bugs can detect. Bed bugs are not limited to the night to feed however and it should not be thought of as only a nocturnal bug.

#### **Bed bugs do not only infest beds.**

Bed bugs acquire their name from the simple fact that they are commonly found in beds. This is however, only one of the places that they are found. Bed bugs can infest nearly anything and should not be thought of AT ALL as limited to bedding.

#### **Bed bugs can travel between apartments.**

Yes bed bugs can indeed travel between apartments via common conduits. This includes electrical outlets, wall partitions, cable tv/telephone wire holes, pipes and other openings between apartments. This does not mean that just because your neighbor has/had bed bugs, that you will have them. The chances for you to acquire bed bugs does increase though, with a neighboring infestation.

#### **Bed bug nymphs and body color.**

Bed bug nymphs are very, very small and often missed during a visual inspection. Nymphs can appear almost clear and become white and bright reddish in color after they have had a chance to feed (after the first feeding they are known as First Instars). The presence of nymphs will indicate that there is egg laying and most likely some sort of infestation already going on or developing.