

Bed Bug Facts

- **About the Bug:** Bed bugs are parasites that preferentially feed on humans. In the past decade, bed bugs have made a comeback across the United States. Presently, it has established in Alameda County. Such infestations usually are not a reflection of poor hygiene or bad housekeeping, although clutter will provide more places for the bugs to hide.
- **Life Cycle:** Adults are reddish brown, flattened oval and wingless. They are visible to the naked eye, about the size of an apple seed or lentil. Nymphs and adults can live upwards of 18+ months without food (blood). The adult's lifespan may encompass 12-18 months. Three or more generations can occur each year.
- **Habits:** Bed bugs are fast moving insects. They feed mostly at night when their host is asleep. After feeding, they crawl away to a hiding place to digest the meal. Bed bugs mostly hide during the day in dark, protected sites. They can hide almost anywhere in a room including in bedding, carpets, wooden holes, and electrical outlets. They usually congregate in groups.
- **Bites:** The bite is normally painless but may cause swelling in some people. Rows of three or more bites are characteristic signs of bed bugs. However, it is extremely difficult to determine an infestation by bites alone. Bed bugs are not known to transmit disease. Some people do not experience any reaction to bites. Some people may show signs of bites within 24 hours; others may take up to 14 days for the signs of bites to show.
- **Tell-tale Signs:** A bed bug infestation may be recognized by blood stains from crushed bugs or by rusty (sometimes dark) spots of excrement on sheets, mattresses, bed clothes, and walls. The shed skins of bed bugs may also be observed.
- **Control Measures:** A licensed pest control professional will work with the homeowner or landlord to provide the best treatment program possible in order to exterminate the pest. Several treatments will be necessary to ensure complete eradication. **Prevention:** Bed bugs rely on people to bring them to new locations. It is important to carefully inspect clothing, luggage, and furniture. Infested items should be bagged before removal to prevent shedding of the bugs and eggs while being moved through common areas.

