

BED BUGS: Top Questions



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Do bed bugs spread disease?

Bed bugs are not known to transmit disease.

What should I do now that I've discovered bed bugs in my apartment?

1. Send a certified letter asking your landlord to remedy the bed bug condition within 30 days. You must have written proof that you notified the landlord.
2. If the landlord refuses to hire a licensed exterminator, call one of the numbers below. Ask if complaints existed before you moved in; if so, you can argue that you didn't cause the problem, and that the landlord should have known about the issue.

Contact: Columbus: Columbus Code Enforcement: 3-1-1
- *Request a confirmation number.*

Worthington: City Office: 614-431-2424

Franklin Co: Franklin County Public Health: 614-525-3928
(outside Columbus or Worthington)

Other counties: Contact your local county health department.

You may also want to call the Better Business Bureau at 614-486-6336.

3. Research. Ask your neighbors - if 10 percent or more of the apartments are infested, Columbus Code Enforcement and Franklin County Public Health can compel the landlord to hire an exterminator.

Can the landlord charge me for the extermination?

Yes. If you and the landlord fail to agree, then get help by contacting:

- Columbus Urban League: 614-257-6300 (Housing Department)

- Community Mediation Service: 614-228-7191

The maintenance person is spraying for bed bugs. Is this allowed?

No. Only a licensed exterminator can eradicate the pests. Some landlords have licensed support staff, but that's rare. If a licensed exterminator isn't used, notify the Ohio Department of Agriculture at 614-728-6987.

Do over-the-counter insecticides work?

No. They do not kill bed bugs that are hiding behind the baseboard or under the carpet. Total release aerosol insecticides (a.k.a. "bug bombs," "flea spray") will make the problem **worse** by scattering the bugs throughout your home.

What should I do given my tenants moved out and left the unit infested with bed bugs?

Talk to your lawyer. If you cannot afford a lawyer;

- Acquaint yourself with the Ohio Revised Code 1923 & 5321
- Call Columbus Urban League at 614-257-6300

Can I get out of my lease if there are bed bugs?

No. Talk to a lawyer. They may be able to help you negotiate a 'Release' from the lease contract.

Is there any money to help my elderly relative who has bed bugs but cannot afford to either hire a licensed professional or prepare for treatment?

No public agency has money to help pay for bed bug treatment at this time. Try talking to your exterminator about scheduling a payment plan. Also, try to **limit the infestation by limiting clutter and following cleaning tips provided on the back of this sheet.**

For help moving furniture or removing clutter, contact local organizations, such as churches or senior centers, to see if there may be help available.

BED BUGS: Moving Tips

don't take bed bugs with you!



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The Central Ohio Bed Bug Task Force recommends that you consult with a licensed pest management professional before moving.

Moving is NOT likely to eliminate your bed bug problem. In fact, it's very likely you will take them with you. If you must move to a new home before your bed bug infestation has been eliminated, follow these tips:

PACKING:

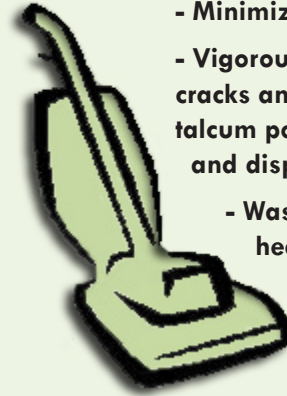
- Wash all fabric items on the hottest recommended setting, **dry on high for at least 30 minutes** and then seal them tightly in clear plastic bags labeled "Clean". (Well-labeled and sealed garbage bags or rubber tubs with lids work also.)
- Put items that cannot be washed and dried (electronics, appliances) inside sealed clear plastic bags and include *Nuvan Prostrips*, available through pest management companies or online. *Nuvan Prostrips* release a vapor in enclosed spaces that kills bed bugs - follow provided instructions. Items may need to remain completely enclosed with the strips for two weeks to one month.
- Buy fabric, bed bug-proof covers for each mattress and box springs in the house. Get the bed off of the floor and onto a frame. Put *ClimbUp Interceptors* under the bed legs. Covers and interceptors are available at retail stores.
- If you decide to throw away infested furniture or mattresses, wrap them in plastic and clearly paint or write "Bed Bugs" on them, so neighbors won't bring the items into their homes.



Inspect your new place for infestations before moving in.



TIPS TO MINIMIZE INFESTATIONS BEFORE AND DURING MOVE:



- Minimize clutter
- Vigorously vacuum carpets, drapes, furniture and all cracks and crevices daily. After vacuuming, vacuum up talcum powder, then put the vacuum bag in a sealed bag and dispose of it outside your home after each use.
- Wash all fabric items in hot water and dry on high heat for at least 30 minutes.
- Vigorously wash any visible dead bugs, eggs and droppings with hot soapy water.
- Cover bed mattresses and box springs with bed bug-proof mattress covers.

MOVING FURNITURE:

- Furniture: remove and pack the contents of the furniture in sealed containers. The empty furniture should then be treated by a licensed pest management professional before moving.
- If a licensed professional is not an option, thoroughly vacuum furniture, including all cracks and crevices. Then, steam clean items with a hand-held steamer or wash with hot, soapy water. After vacuuming, put vacuum bag in a sealed bag and dispose of outside your home.

PEOPLE AND PETS:

- Have each person shower and change into clean clothing and shoes and then bag up the current (possibly infested) clothes and shoes for laundering. Make sure that any pet bedding also is laundered. Be sure to disinfect any pet carrier.

UNPACKING:

- Before personal belongings are taken in to the the new home, they **MUST** be free of bed bugs, or the new home will become infested as well.
- If you acquire any new or used furniture, inspect it carefully before bringing it into your home to make sure it is bug free.
- Contact your building manager immediately if you notice any signs of bed bugs in your new home. The earlier an infestation is detected, the easier it will be to treat.