



**COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO HEALTH AGENCY
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES DIVISION**

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BED BUG FACT SHEET

WHAT ARE BED BUGS?

Bed bugs are small reddish-brown wingless insects that feed on human blood during the night. They are about the size of a lady bug or apple seed. They are visible to the naked eye, but often hide in cracks and crevices and can be difficult to detect. They are usually transported from one place to another on a person's clothing or belongings.

ARE BED BUGS DANGEROUS?

Although bed bugs may be a nuisance to people, they are not known to spread disease to humans. They are known to cause allergic reactions in sensitive people from their saliva.

WHAT DOES A BED BUG BITE LOOK AND FEEL LIKE?

Typically, the bite is painless and rarely awakens a sleeping person. It can produce large, itchy welts on the skin. Welts from bed bug bites do not have a red spot in the center – those welts are more characteristic of flea bites.

WHERE DO BED BUGS LIVE?

Bed bugs are most commonly found in sleeping areas, and often hide in or near beds and bedroom furniture. During non-feeding periods, they will hide in cracks and crevices of mattress seams, bed frames, box springs, and nightstands, or behind headboards, wall hangings, or baseboards.

HOW CAN I PREVENT AN INFESTATION?

When traveling, examine the bed and headboard area for signs of bed bugs and elevate luggage off the floor. Launder clothing in hot water immediately upon returning home. Inspect all used furniture thoroughly before bringing it into your home, and never bring discarded furniture into your home.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF AN INFESTATION?

You may see the bed bugs themselves, empty bed bug skins, small blood stains from crushed bugs, or small dark spots from bed bug droppings.

WHAT CAN I DO IF MY HOME IS INFESTED WITH BED BUGS?

Bed bug infestations can be very difficult to control, and often require multiple methods for complete eradication. The California Department of Public Health recommends hiring a professional pest control operator for this purpose.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

- Vector-Borne Disease Section at the California Department of Public Health:
<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/healthinfo/discond/pages/bedbugs.aspx>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:
http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/publications/Bed_Bugs_CDC-EPA_Statement.htm

