

## BED BUG PREVENTION

### **DON'T BRING BED BUGS INTO YOUR HOME!**

1) *Bed bugs can be brought home on second hand items (clothing, electronics, furniture, etc.).*

- Wash and dry second hand clothes on a hot setting. Put into a clean bag.
- Heating items to 60°C will kill eggs, nymphs and adults.
- Inspect items thoroughly for signs of bedbugs. If in doubt, keep it out.

2) *Bed bugs can be brought home on your clothing or belongings. If you go into an infested situation:*

- Store your purse and backpack in a pest proof container such as a sealed plastic bag. Alternatively, store items where bed bugs are less likely to be (a tabletop rather than a bed).
- Avoid sitting on upholstered furniture or beds.
- When you get home, put clothes in a hot drier for 1 cycle to kill hitch-hiking bed bugs.

3) *Bed bugs can be brought in by visitors.*

- Ask visitors who come from an infested home to check their clothing for hitchhiking bed bugs and to store belongings in a sealed plastic bag or container.

### **DON'T SPREAD BED BUGS IF YOU HAVE THEM!**

- Discard infested items in sealed bags (moving companies often have mattress bags).
- Do not drag infested mattresses (furniture, etc.) through hallways.
- Mark discarded furniture "bed bug infested" or make it unusable.
- Don't give away or sell infested items.

## **PROTECT YOUR BELONGINGS FROM GETTING INFESTED**

- Use bed bug proof mattress and box spring covers. (Bed bugs are unable to chew through anything, so store valuables in sealed containers.)
- When travelling inspect your sleeping quarters.



## **PESTICIDE SAFETY**

Care must always be taken to prevent accidental exposure to pesticides even though all registered products are considered safe to use if handled properly.

If you use pesticides, always read and follow the instructions on the label.

If your home is going to be treated with pesticides it is recommended that you:

- Vacate premises during treatment;
- Arrange to be out for 4 to 8 hours after the application (24 hours if you are pregnant, or have respiratory ailments, allergies or are sensitive to chemicals);
- Air out the suite well when you return;
- Always follow the advice of the pest control applicator.

Re-entry time will vary depending on pesticide used, method of treatment and individual susceptibility.

**Vancouver Coastal Health encourages the application of Integrated Pest Management (I.P.M.) principles for safe and effective pest control**

## **SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

### **GOVERNMENT OF BC - BC HEALTH FILES**

Website:  
[www.bchealthguide.org/healthfiles/httoc.stm](http://www.bchealthguide.org/healthfiles/httoc.stm)

### **HEALTH CANADA**

Website: [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pmra](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pmra)  
Pesticide & Pest Management:  
Within Lower Mainland **604-666-3350**  
Outside Lower Mainland **1-800-267-6315**

### **MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT**

Pesticide Control Office **604-582-5200**

### **POISON CONTROL CENTRE**

Within Lower Mainland **604-682-5050**  
Outside Lower Mainland **1-800-567-8911**

### **STRUCTURAL PEST MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION OF BC**

Website: [www.spmabc.com](http://www.spmabc.com)

**You may be referred to your local municipality for complaints follow-up.**

**For additional information about bed bugs, please contact your local Vancouver Coastal Health office listed below.**

### **VANCOUVER COASTAL HEALTH HEALTH PROTECTION OFFICES**

<b>Coast Garibaldi</b>	<b>1-887-892-2231</b>
<b>North Shore</b>	<b>604-983-6700</b>
<b>Richmond</b>	<b>604-233-3147</b>
<b>Squamish</b>	<b>604-892-2293</b>
<b>Vancouver</b>	<b>604-675-3800</b>

Website: [www.vch.ca/environmental](http://www.vch.ca/environmental)

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# **GUIDE TO BED BUG CONTROL**

## **INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT SERIES**



**Information regarding the control of bed bugs**

**An environmentally sound approach to pest control**

**VANCOUVER COASTAL HEALTH**  
Health Protection

**vancouver coastalHealth**  
Promoting wellness. Empowering communities.

## PURPOSE

The aim of this pamphlet is to provide the general public and building owners with information on:

- 1) Identification of bed bugs;
- 2) Prevention of bed bug infestation;
- 3) Control of bed bugs within your dwelling using an integrated pest management approach;
- 4) Information on pesticide safety;
- 5) Who to contact for further information.



## IDENTIFICATION

Bed bugs are small brownish, flattened parasites (4 - 5 mm long) that feed on the blood of humans, birds, and other mammals.

- Bed bugs are flightless but can crawl quickly over floors, walls and ceilings.
- They can also hitch rides or move around on clothing, furniture, purses and luggage.
- Females lay up to 5 eggs a day (200 - 500 in a lifetime). The eggs are tiny, whitish and barely visible (size of a dust speck).
- Bed bugs are very resilient. Nymphs can survive months without feeding and the adults for more than a year.

## SIGNS OF AN INFESTATION

Bed bugs generally hide in cracks and crevices during the day and come out to feed at night.

- Bed bugs do not have nests like ants or bees but tend to hide in clusters.
- Bed bugs prefer to hide close to where they feed and go back to the same hiding spot. They will crawl more than 100 feet to obtain a blood meal.
- Most infestations start around beds and spread throughout a room and beyond.
- Bed bugs usually bite people at night while they are sleeping.
- The bites can occur on any exposed skin and the symptoms vary with the individual.
- Some people develop an itchy welt or localized swelling, while others have little or no reaction.
- Blood stains (black/red), spots of fecal material on upholstered furniture, sheets, pillows, mattress and box springs are also signs of infestation.
- Unpleasant sweet musty odour may occur with a severe infestation.

During the early part of an infestation bed bugs are more likely to be found on boxsprings, upholstered furniture, mattresses and headboards. If allowed to multiply, they establish themselves behind baseboards, window and door casings, pictures, moldings, and in furniture, loosened wallpaper, and cracks in plaster and partitions.

## CONTROL OF BED BUGS

Bed bugs are difficult to deal with and require the combined efforts of the tenant, property owner and qualified pest control technician.

A combination of preparation prior to treatment, chemical treatment, pest proofing and monitoring is recommended to effectively control bed bugs.

1) *Follow the preparation instructions that your landlord or pest control company provides you. They may include:*

- Laundering clothes and linens on hot settings. Transport in sealed bags to prevent spread of insects. Store clean items in sealed bags until chemical treatment is completed.
- Vacuum thoroughly, especially along carpet edges. Dispose of vacuum bag in a sealed plastic bag. Remove from home immediately.
- Remove all belongings from furniture, tables, wardrobes, and closets to allow pest control technician to treat items. Store belongings as directed.
- Move furniture away from edges. Dismantle bed and other furniture.
- If heavy infestation some items such as fabric furniture may have to be discarded.
- Remove pictures, electrical outlet covers from walls.
- Eliminate clutter. The more clutter, the harder it is to get rid of bed bugs.

2) *Treatment:*

- Multiple dwellings must be serviced by a certified pest control technician.
- Be prepared for more than one treatment.

**Contact a professional pest control company if you suspect a bed bug problem**

3) *Pest proofing work done by owner includes:*

- Wash and caulk cracks and crevices in walls, ceiling and floors.
- Paint walls and ceilings where paint is peeling or chipped.
- Remove peeling wall paper.

4) *A building owner/manager should regularly inspect suites for bed bugs and make sure there is not too much clutter.*

- The greater the bed bug problem, the greater the number of inspections needed.

**VACUUM, VACUUM, VACUUM**

- It is easier to control a bed bug problem when numbers are low.

## SELF-CARE

Suggestions for the treatment of bites include:

- Resist the urge to scratch;
- Wash the bite areas with antiseptic soap to reduce the risk of infection;
- Apply an ice pack frequently to help relieve swelling;
- Ointments or lotions can be applied to ease itching;
- See your doctor if the bite develops into an infection. Skin irritation, swelling or infection may be due to other medical conditions or insect bites other than bed bugs.

In rare cases people can have a serious allergic reaction to bed bug bites.

**Bed bugs are not associated with the transmission of human disease**