



In need of some assistance with a bed bug infestation?

**Call us today**

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**BED BUGS:**  
Pest Advice

London Network for Pest Solutions Ltd provides information leaflets on the following pests:

Rats • Mice • Cockroaches • Squirrels • Bed Bugs • Wasps •  
Flies • Fleas • Moths • Ants • Foxes • Birds • Spiders

## What do bed bugs eat?

Bed bugs do snack on animals, but ultimately a bed bug's favourite thing to eat is human blood. Normally they will feed every 3 to 4 days and will only appear in darkness, typically when you are fast asleep. Surprisingly, bed bugs can survive extreme starvation and have been known to live for up to 12 months without feeding.

## What do they look like?

If you think you might have bed bugs, there are a few key characteristics you should be aware of. Bed bugs typically have small, flat, oval-shaped bodies and are wingless, although they do have vestiges of wings called 'wing pads', which shape their back. These insects are brown in colour, though after feeding they normally become reddened. You can expect their bodies to be up to 5mm long – a similar size to an apple seed.

## Where do bed bugs live?

Bed bugs are found wherever human beings sleep within a property. They tend to prefer fabric or wood over plastic and metal, and often hide near to where you sleep – for example, under the mattress or along the headboard. They can also be found away from the bed in other furniture, along the edges of carpets and even behind mirrors or inside smoke alarms. Modern buildings often allow bed bugs to migrate along terraced houses and between flats, spreading the problem away from the original infestation.

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Bed bugs are not carriers of disease, but the subsequent scratching from bites can lead to secondary infection of the skin.

## What are the signs of infestation?

If you are suffering with multiple bites after sleeping, which are red and itchy, it is likely you have an infestation of these irritating little blood-suckers. Aside from having bites on your skin, there are other ways you can check to see if you have bed bugs living in your home. You might notice small bugs or tiny white eggs in the crevices and joints of your mattress and furniture – it's best to use a bright torch to check for these.

You may also find tiny black spots on your mattress where they have left a trail of their dried poo, as well as blood spots on your sheets after they have fed. Mottled bedbug shells may also be found, as bed bugs shed their skin as they grow. The other, more obvious tell-tale sign is an unpleasant, musty scent in your bedroom or home.

## How can I avoid getting bed bugs?

Bed bugs are one of the world's best hitchhikers – they find themselves a new home by travelling into yours via luggage, second-hand furniture, carpets and in very rare cases, even clothing. Vigilance is key to prevent bed bugs extending their six legs across your front door; make sure to carefully inspect any items – especially second-hand – which enter your home for signs of infestation.

## Are bed bugs bad for my health?

Bed bugs aren't carriers of disease, although the minuscule creatures are no bark, they're all bite. A bed bug bite results in red rash-like bumps, which often appear in a straight line on exposed areas such as the arms, legs and face. The bites are uncomfortable, itchy and the subsequent scratching can cause secondary infection on the skin. If there is a particularly aggressive infestation of bed bugs, you could be at risk of anaemia.

## How to de-bug your home

A proper de-infestation is a complex process and treatments must be very thorough, which is why they should be carried out by a professional. Standard treatments include a bed bug specific insecticide, which is applied to the nooks and crannies where bed bugs could be hiding; bed frames, flooring, headboards and skirting boards. Mattresses should also be sprayed with a water-diluted spray, and all linen needs to be washed at the highest possible temperature.

We do not advocate self treatment, Bed bugs are far too hard to treat and because insecticides are sprayed on mattresses there is a chance of contamination, also there are a limited amount of products that can be used on bedding and so following generic advice is a bad idea.

Post-treatment, avoid vacuuming for seven days and monitor your home for several weeks to ensure treatment has been successful.

