



# Bedbugs

## Why are bedbugs a pest?

Bedbugs are not considered a public health pest officially, but they can be an unpleasant and persistent nuisance due to their feeding habits. Bedbugs draw blood from their hosts by piercing the skin. It is the bedbug's saliva which causes the redness, swelling and itching. Some people could have an allergic reaction which is a concern for those at risk of anaphylaxis. Unlike mosquitoes and ticks there are no confirmed cases of bedbugs spreading diseases from one human to another, even though the bedbug possesses all the correct tools to do so!



## Signs of bedbugs

The following are signs that you may have a bedbug infestation:

**Sightings** - adult bedbugs are roughly apple pip size and may vary slightly in colour. After a feed they will appear red / purple. Hungry bedbugs will appear opaque. You may find adults near the food sources for example in mattress seams, corners and buttons. You may also be able to see bedbugs in sockets, cracks and crevices, on curtains or along skirting boards and carpet edges

**Bites** - bedbugs are nocturnal creatures and will feed when humans are asleep at night.



These bites will be red, slightly swollen, itchy (an anti itch cream such as calamine lotion may help) and may appear in clusters

**Staining** - bedbugs deposit their faeces after every meal. This will appear as dark brown stains on bedding especially around the edges of mattresses and bed frames where they are mainly found. This will be more pronounced with heavier infestations

**Blood** - spots of blood may be found in bedding. This is caused from the bedbugs feeding or from the crushing of the insect

## How to prevent an infestation

Bedbug infestations are on the rise, mainly due to the increase of worldwide travel. It is mainly places where people are very transient such as hotels and hostels that tend to report repeat infestations. Bedbugs are excellent travelers and holidaymakers can often carry infested suitcases back and infest their homes.

By following these tips you may be able to prevent an infestation:

- Store any suitcases and bags off the ground and away from your bed when staying in any multi occupied establishments abroad or in the UK
- If you have travelled and stayed in public accommodation then store your suitcase in an isolated area until you or a qualified pest technician can thoroughly inspect it
- When buying second hand furniture inspect it thoroughly looking for insects within the seams, cracks and crevices
- Vacuuming the mattress and fabrics of the infested areas may help reduce the number of insects and eggs. The vacuum needs to be emptied outside into a sealed bag and disposed of in the outside bin. This will not prevent bedbugs but will help control numbers

## Control

You should seek a professional pest controller. They should be a member of the British Pest Control Association (call 01332 294 288 or visit [www.bpca.org.uk](http://www.bpca.org.uk)) or the National Pest Technician Association (call 01949 81133 or visit [www.npta.org.uk](http://www.npta.org.uk)). When seeking the services of a private contractor you should always obtain a minimum of three quotes. This will allow you to compare service and price.