

# *All You need to know about Bed Bug Beddy*



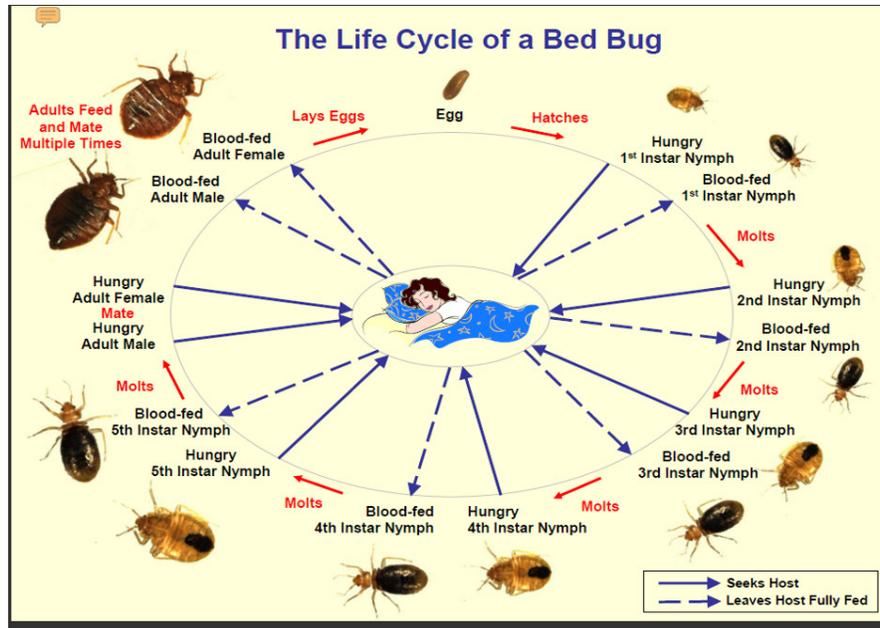
*By*



**P I O N E E R**  
**C O N S T R U C T I O N**  
**S E R V I C E S**

## What are Bed Bugs?

Bed bugs are small wingless insects that feed solely upon the blood of warm-blooded animals. Bed bugs and their relatives have evolved as nest parasites. *Cimex lectularius* are the most common in North America. Certain kinds inhabit bird nests and bat roosts and await the return of their hosts; others have adapted well to living in the 'nests' (homes) of people. Hatchling bed bugs are about the size of a poppy seed, and adults are about 1/4 of an inch in length. From above they are oval in shape, but are flattened from top to bottom.



## Life Cycles of the Thirsty and Thriving Bed Bugs

When bed bugs (*Cimex lectularius*) have adequate available blood sources they also have a shorter lifespan. Bed bugs who feed regularly have a lifespan of ten months, while those without adequate feeding can live up to 1 ½ years. If a blood host is available, bedbugs can live to see three generations of offspring ready willing and hungry to prey on their human hosts.

Bed bugs (females) deposit three to eight eggs per day. A total of 300-500 eggs can be produced by a single bug. Their eggs are 1/25" long and curved. They are often deposited in clusters and attached to cracks, crevices or rough surfaces near adult harborages with a sticky epoxy-like substance.

Eggs typically hatch in a week to 12 days. The freshly hatched nymph is beige-colored before feeding, and then turns a reddish color after getting a blood meal. There are 5 nymphal stages for bed bugs to reach maturity, which usually takes about 32-48 days with regular feedings.

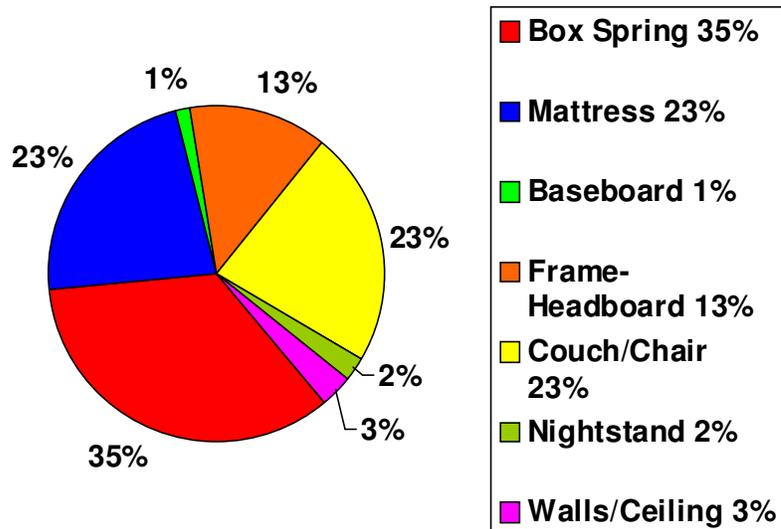
### **Do bed bugs cause harm or spread pathogens (disease-causing germs)?**

Bedbugs seem to possess all of the necessary prerequisites for being capable of passing diseases from one host to another, but there have been no known cases of bed bugs passing disease from host to host. There are at least twenty-seven known pathogens (some estimates are as high as forty-one) that are capable of living inside a bed bug or on its mouthparts. Extensive testing in laboratory settings concludes that bed bugs are unlikely to pass disease from one person to another. Therefore bedbugs are less dangerous than some more common insects such as the flea.

The salivary fluid injected by bed bugs typically causes the skin to become irritated and inflamed, although individuals can differ in their sensitivity. Anaphylactoid reactions produced by the injection of serum and other nonspecific proteins are observed and there is the possibility that the saliva of the bedbugs may cause anaphylactic shock in a small percentage of people. It is also possible that sustained feeding by bedbugs may lead to anemia. It is also important to watch for and treat any secondary bacterial infection. Systemic poisoning may occur if the bites are numerous.

### **How do bed bugs invade a home?**

Because bed bugs readily hide in small crevices, they may accompany (as stowaways) luggage, furniture, clothing, pillows, boxes, and other such objects when these are moved between apartments, homes and hotels. Used furniture; particularly bed frames and mattresses, are of greatest risk of harboring bed bugs and their eggs. Thus, one should carefully scrutinize and consider the history of any used furniture, particularly 'street' items so plentiful at the beginning and end of each academic year. Because they readily survive for many months without feeding, bed bugs may already be present in apparently 'vacant' and 'clean' apartments. Bed bugs can wander between adjoining apartments through voids in walls and holes through which wires and pipes pass. In a few cases, bats and/or birds may introduce and maintain bed bugs and their close relatives (bat bugs and bird bugs). Pest control personnel should be mindful of the presence of blood feeding insects and mites that may be left behind after removing nests or roosts of birds and bats in and on the home.



### Where do bed bugs Hide?

They are most abundant in rooms where people sleep, and they generally hide nearest the bed or other furniture used for sleeping. Bed bugs are most active in the middle of the night, but when hungry, they will venture out during the day to seek a host. Their flattened bodies allow them to conceal themselves in cracks and crevices around the room and within furniture. Favorite hiding sites include the bed frame, mattress and box spring. Clutter around the room offers additional sites for these bugs to hide, and increases the difficulty in eliminating bed bugs once they have become established.

# DON'T



Although bed bugs can be annoying, they can be battled safely and successfully if you adopt a well-considered strategy.

Do not apply pesticides unless you fully understand what you are applying and the risks involved. You are legally liable if you misapply a pesticide, or apply it without a license to the property of another (including common spaces in apartment buildings).

Do not dispose of furniture that is useful. Infested furniture can be cleaned and treated. Placing infested furniture (particularly mattresses) into common areas or on the street may simply help spread bed bugs to the homes of other people. Infested furniture intended for disposal should be defaced to make it less attractive to other people. Officials in some municipalities affix to potentially infested furniture a label to warn of bed bugs. To reduce opportunities of infested furniture re-entering their building, building managers should ensure that any disposed furniture is locked within a dumpster or immediately carted away to a landfill or waste facility.