

# Let's Beat the Bug!

## Laundering Items to Kill Bed Bugs

### *In Short:*

- Washing your clothes is an easy way to kill bed bugs.
- Sort your clothes into plastic bags before you leave the infested area.
- Wash and dry clothes and bedding on the highest temperature the fabric will allow.
- If you still have bed bugs in your home keep the clean clothes in clean plastic bags or plastic boxes so they will not get bed bugs again.

Washing clothes and bedding is a simple and cheap method of killing all bed bugs. It is a very important part of both do-it-yourself bed bug control, and when you have a professional pest management company apply insecticides. Washing will kill some of the bed bugs, but it is the heat of drying that will kill any remaining bed bugs. With a few common-sense practices, you can easily disinfest clothes and ensure these items do not become bed bug hiding places as you remove bed bugs from the rest of your home.



### **Key Steps In Washing Clothes to Control Bed Bugs**

There are three main steps to think about when washing items to remove bed bugs. These steps include: sorting clothes; washing and drying; and storing clean clothes.

#### **Sorting clothes**

- ✓ In the infested area, pre-sort clothes as you would when you normally wash clothes and place each sorted pile into its own plastic bag. Make note of the washing instructions. This will allow you to set the highest allowable wash and dry temperatures for your clothes.
- ✓ Separate dry-clean-only clothes because these should not be made wet, but they may be placed in a dryer.
- ✓ Seal the bags prior to moving your laundry. This will prevent bed bugs from moving into other areas of your home or the Laundromat.



For more information contact the **Bed Bug InformationLine** at 612-624-2200, [bedbugs@umn.edu](mailto:bedbugs@umn.edu), or visit [www.bedbugs.umn.edu](http://www.bedbugs.umn.edu)

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## Washing and drying clothes

- ✓ Tip each bag into a washer (or the dryer for dry-clean-only).
- ✓ When each bag is emptied, fold the bag opening into the center then wrap the rest of the bag around the opening.
- ✓ Immediately put empty bags into another clean bag and seal before disposal.
- ✓ Wash and dry the clothes on the hottest temperature the fabric can safely withstand.
- ✓ For dry clean clothes that are able to be placed in a dryer, put into a dryer on at least medium to high setting and run the dryer for at least 30 minutes. Then take dry clean clothes to a professional cleaner's for cleaning and pressing. Drying will kill the bugs but not clean the clothes.
- ✓ If you want to only kill bed bugs and do not need to wash your clothes, simply putting infested items in the dryer for 30 minutes on high heat will kill all the bed bugs.

## Storing cleaned clothes

- ✓ Fold clothes as soon as they are removed from the dryer. If you are doing laundry in a commercial laundromat or laundry facility in an apartment complex, place the clothes immediately into a new plastic bag. Do not set your clothes on a folding table unless you have inspected the table for bed bugs.
- ✓ Keep the clean clothes in bags until you arrive at your apartment.
  - If you have successfully controlled bed bugs in your home, take the laundry out of the bag and put away.
  - If you still have an infestation, keep the folded laundry in the bag and remove clothes as needed. This will prevent the clothes from becoming reinfested.



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In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, this information is available in alternative forms of communication upon request by calling 651/201-6000. TTY users can call the Minnesota Relay Service at 711 or 1-800-627-3529.

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