

# Let's Beat the Bug!

## Have I Found a Bed Bug?

### *In Short:*

- Bed bugs may have different shapes and sizes
- Bed bugs are small insects, about the size of an apple seed.
- Look for bed bugs, fecal spots and skins
- Bed bugs are night feeders, but sometimes feed during the day
- How can I tell that I found a bed bug
- What to do if I find a bed bug



Bed bugs can be difficult to identify as they are similar to many other small insects. Also, their appearance will change depending on their age and if they have recently eaten.

Adult bed bugs are reddish brown in color and approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch long; they are nearly as wide as they are long. They are about the size of an apple seed. Juvenile bed bugs can be very small and very hard to see.

Bed bugs do not have wings, and cannot fly. Bed Bugs can move very quickly on both horizontal and vertical surfaces

If a bed bug has not recently eaten it is flat and oval shaped. Once a bed bug has bitten someone it swells in size, becoming longer and redder in color; frequently compared to the shape of a cigar.

If you have a bed bug infestation you may also notice cast skins. The cast skin of a bed bug is an empty shell that is left behind when a bed bug grows. This skin will be in the shape of a bed bug but it will be transparent.

Bed bugs are active mainly at night, so it is unlikely that you will see one during the day. They can become accustomed to feeding during the day if they become aware that people are resting or sleeping during the day. Bed bugs may be seen during the day if there is a big infestation, or if the insect you have found is actually a bat bug. Bat Bugs are very similar to bed bugs and are often found in places with bats or birds. Bugs should be sent to a professional for identification.

If you think you have found a bed bug, try to catch it on a piece of tape or put it in a plastic bag, you can then have this bug identified by a pest management professional (exterminator).

If an exterminator cannot verify it is a bed bug, send a sample on sticky tape to:

Bed Bug *InformationLine*  
Rm 219 Hodson Hall  
1980 Folwell Ave  
St. Paul, MN 55108

If you find bed bugs, make a note of when and where you saw them. This will help the pest management professional in the inspection of your home and will increase the likeliness that treatment will be effective.



**For more information contact the Bed Bug *InformationLine* at 612-624-2200, 1-855-644-2200, [bedbugs@umn.edu](mailto:bedbugs@umn.edu), or visit [www.bedbugs.umn.edu](http://www.bedbugs.umn.edu)**

By Amelia Shindelar and Dr. Stephen Kells, 2011

Funding for "Let's Beat the Bug" Campaign provided by the United States Environmental Protection Agency and MDA. Additional assistance from the Minnesota Department of Health was greatly appreciated.

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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Updated on May 27, 2014

