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## Bed Bugs

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# Do-it-yourself Bed Bug Control

Información relacionada disponible en español <<https://espanol.epa.gov/control-de-plagas/controlde-las-chinches-usted-mismo>>

## Can you get rid of bed bugs on your own?

Treating bed bugs is complex. Your likelihood of success depends on many factors, including:

- How many bed bugs you have;
- How much clutter is available for hiding places;
- Whether your neighbors have bedbugs; and
- Whether all residents of a house or building will participate.

Getting rid of bed bugs completely can take weeks to months, depending on the nature and extent of the infestation. To be successful, everyone will need to cooperate and do their part.

The following steps will help you begin:

1. Identify the problem
2. Develop a strategy
3. Keep the infestation from expanding
4. Prepare for treatment
5. Kill the bed bugs

## 6. Evaluate and prevent

You may have to follow these steps more than once to kill all the bugs and their eggs.

### **Identify the Problem**

- Identify the pest:
  - Collect a sample of the pest to show an extension agent [EXIT](http://npic.orst.edu/pest/countyext.htm) or other insect expert.
  - Extension agents can identify the pest at no cost to you. They are trained in pest control and know your local area.
- If an extension agent or other expert says the pest is a bed bug, notify your landlord if you live in an apartment. The units near yours should be inspected.
  - Landlords may have a responsibility [EXIT](https://www.news.iastate.edu/news/2019/03/04/bedbugs) to participate in treatment.
  - Check the housing codes and laws in your area [EXIT](https://epa.gov/bedbugs/bed-bug-laws-and-regulations).
- Inspect all areas [EXIT](https://epa.gov/bedbugs/how-find-bed-bugs) that may have bed bugs, plus surrounding living spaces, to find out the extent of infestation.

### **Develop a Strategy**

- Make a schedule for completing the steps below. Be sure to include any personal plans, such as vacations.
- Keep records through the whole process. Note the dates and exact locations where pests are found. This will help you track progress and better know where to target your work.
- Keep checking for at least a year after you're done to make sure all the bed bugs are gone.

### **Keep the Infestation from Spreading**

- Remove infested items. Place them in a sealed plastic bag and treat them. Learn more about treatment methods in the sections below.
- Items that cannot be treated should be placed in a sealed plastic bag and left there for up to a year to ensure any active bugs are dead.
- Empty the vacuum after each use. Seal the bag as tightly as possible and immediately throw it out in an outdoor trash container.
- Discard furniture responsibly if you can't safely eliminate the bed bugs. Destroy it so someone else won't be tempted to bring it into their home. For example:
  - Rip covers and remove stuffing from furniture items.
  - Use spray paint to mark furniture with "Bed Bugs."
- Have infested items picked up as soon as possible by the trash collection agency.
- Don't discard furniture if you can safely eliminate the bed bugs from it.

## Prepare for Treatment

Preparing for treatment is very important; it will make it easier to monitor for bed bugs that haven't been eliminated. This preparation should be completed whether you are doing the treatment yourself or hiring a professional.

Learn more about preparing for treatment <<https://epa.gov/bedbugs/preparing-treatment-against-bed-bugs>>

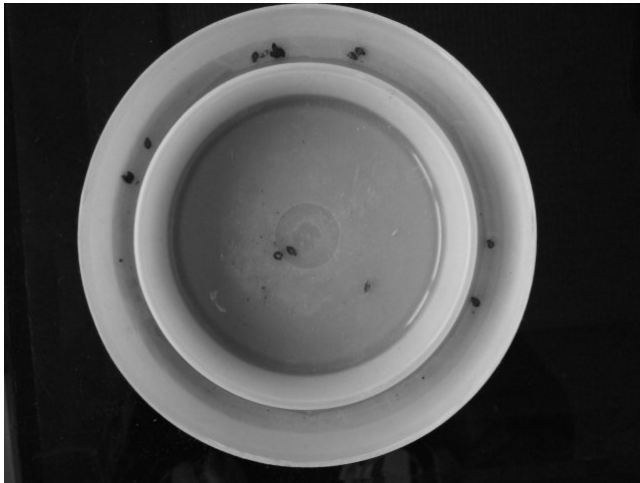
Learn about treatment options (PDF) <<http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/pdf/bb-nonchemical1.pdf>>. (4 pp, 480 K, About PDF <<https://epa.gov/home/pdf-files>>)

## Kill the Bed Bugs

- Make sure the methods you select are safe, effective and legal. See What's Legal, What's Not <<https://epa.gov/bedbugs/stay-legal-and-safe-treating-bed-bugs>>.

- Consider **non-chemical methods** of killing bed bugs. Some will be more useful than others depending on your situation. These and other methods can be helpful, but they might not get rid of the infestation entirely:
  - **Heat treatment:** You can use a clothes dryer on high heat. You can also use black plastic bags in a hot, closed car in the sun, but success depends on your climate and other factors. Do-it-yourself heat treatments might not work. Professionals have access to more intensive and proven methods that can even treat whole houses with heat. You may also purchase a portable heat chamber, which is usually quite effective.
  - **Cold treatment** can be successful in the home environment if the freezer is set to 0° F. You must leave the items in a sealed bag in the freezer at that temperature for four days. Always use a thermometer to check the temperature, since home freezers are not always set to 0°.
  - **Steam cleaners** (wet or dry) can get into cracks and fabrics to treat carpets, baseboards, bed frames, and other furniture. The steam temperature must be at least 130° F but should not have a forceful airflow, or it may cause bed bugs to scatter. Use a diffuser to prevent scattering.
- **If needed, hire a pest management professional or use pesticides** carefully according to the label directions:
  - Look for EPA-registered pesticides that have bed bugs listed on the label.
  - Use foggers (bug bombs) only with extreme care and only if bed bugs are listed on the label. Improper use can harm your health or cause a fire or explosion. Foggers should not be your only method of bed bug control. The spray will not reach the cracks and crevices where bed bugs hide. See Should I Use a Fogger? <<https://epa.gov/bedbugs/should-i-use-fogger>> for more information.

- **Carefully look for any evidence of bed bugs** every few days after you complete your initial cleanup and control processes. If you see bed bugs, either the initial cleanup missed some bugs or eggs have hatched. Retreatment may be needed.
- Consider using different types of pesticides <<https://epa.gov/bedbugs/pesticides-control-bed-bugs>> if repeated treatments are needed. **Desiccants (chemicals that dry things out) can be particularly effective** in some situations since they work by drying out the bug (which means the bed bugs can't develop resistance).
  - If using desiccants, be sure to use only products registered by EPA as a pesticide <<https://epa.gov/bedbugs/stay-legal-and-safe-treating-bed-bugs>>.
  - **Do not use pool- or food-grade diatomaceous earth** (made from the fossilized remains of tiny, aquatic organisms called diatoms). This type of diatomaceous earth can harm you when you breathe it in. The pesticide version uses a different size of diatoms, which reduces the hazard.
  - Desiccants can be very effective but may take several months to work.



Bed bug interceptor (place under furniture legs to catch bed bugs)

## Evaluate and Prevent

- Continue to inspect for bed bugs, at least every 7 days, in case any eggs remain. You can use interceptors, traps or other monitoring methods. Interceptors are placed under the legs of furniture to catch bed bugs and keep them from climbing the legs. Commercial and do-it-yourself interceptors are options.
- Continue to protect your home from bed bugs. <<https://epa.gov/bedbugs/protecting-your-home-bed-bugs>>

For additional information, please see :The following links exit the site

Bed bugs — National Pesticide Information Center EXIT

<<http://npic.orst.edu/pest/bedbug/index.html>>

Bed bugs: Do-it-yourself control options -- Texas A & M AgriLife Extension EXIT

<<https://citybugs.tamu.edu/factsheets/biting-stinging/others/ent-3012/>>

Bed Bug Control in Residences -- University of Minnesota EXIT

<[https://www.bedbugs.umn.edu/sites/bedbugs.umn.edu/files/y2017m04d15\\_bed\\_bug\\_control\\_in\\_residences.pdf](https://www.bedbugs.umn.edu/sites/bedbugs.umn.edu/files/y2017m04d15_bed_bug_control_in_residences.pdf)>

Bed Bugs Integrated Pest Management in and Around the Home -- University of California EXIT <<http://ipm.ucanr.edu/pmg/pestnotes/pn7454.html>>

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— [Finding Bed Bugs <https://epa.gov/bedbugs/how-find-bed-bugs>](https://epa.gov/bedbugs/how-find-bed-bugs)

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[Protecting Your Home <https://epa.gov/bedbugs/protecting-your-home-bed-bugs>](https://epa.gov/bedbugs/protecting-your-home-bed-bugs)

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[Protecting Yourself in Public Places <https://epa.gov/bedbugs/protecting-yourself-bed-bugs-public-places>](https://epa.gov/bedbugs/protecting-yourself-bed-bugs-public-places)

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[Getting Rid of Bed Bugs <https://epa.gov/bedbugs/getting-rid-bed-bugs>](https://epa.gov/bedbugs/getting-rid-bed-bugs)

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— [Pesticides to Control Bed Bugs](https://epa.gov/bedbugs/pesticides-control-bed-bugs) <<https://epa.gov/bedbugs/pesticides-control-bed-bugs>>

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[Bed Bug Information Clearinghouse](https://epa.gov/bedbugs/bed-bug-information-clearinghouse) <<https://epa.gov/bedbugs/bed-bug-information-clearinghouse>>

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[Bed Bug Product Search Tool](https://epa.gov/bedbugs/find-bed-bug-pesticide-product) <<https://epa.gov/bedbugs/find-bed-bug-pesticide-product>>

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[Finding Help with Bed Bug Problems](https://epa.gov/bedbugs/local-resources-bed-bug-assistance) <<https://epa.gov/bedbugs/local-resources-bed-bug-assistance>>

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