

Is there anything I can do to prevent bed bugs?

Bed bugs like to travel and hide. Some simple prevention methods are:

- Regular house cleaning including good vacuuming
- Inspect any used furniture or clothing that you buy before bringing it home
- When travelling, look at the mattress and furniture for bed bugs before settling in. If you see bugs, move to another room, not next door as bed bugs can travel through walls and along pipes
- Keep your luggage off the floor. Inspect your luggage when you return home after a trip
- Whenever possible, after travelling, wash your clothing in hot water and dry in hot air dryer

More information on bed bugs can be found at:

<http://www.toronto.ca/health/bedbugs/factsheets.htm>

Handwashing



Always Wash Your Hands

- before and after touching food
- after using the washroom
- after sneezing, coughing or blowing your nose
- after touching pets or handling garbage
- after outdoor activities

 **TORONTO** Public Health

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Bed Bugs

Patient and Visitor Information

at St. Joseph's Health
Centre

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Bed Bugs - Patient and Visitor Information

What are bed bugs?

Bed bugs are insects about ¼ inch long with oval bodies. They can live for one year. They do not have wings. Eggs hatch in 10 days and are too tiny to be seen.

Bed bugs feed on the blood of mammals, including humans and birds by biting with their mouth. They usually bite at night and like to hide during the day.

Can I get sick from bed bugs?

No diseases have been reported from a bed bug bite. Bites can cause itching and in some cases allergic reactions. Excessive scratching can cause skin infection.

Where do bed bugs come from?

Bed bugs are travellers. They can live in the cleanest home. They like to travel in suitcases, used furniture and clothing. They hide during the day in any crack or crevice they can find,

including your mattress, pillows or baseboards. Bed bugs can go without a meal for as long as six months.

How do I take care of bed bug bites?

Most bites go away on their own. If bites are very itchy, your doctor may give you some medication to relieve this.

It is important to try not to scratch as too much scratching can cause a secondary skin infection and antibiotics may be needed.

What do I do with my clothing when there are bed bugs?

Clothing should be placed in a waterproof bag until it can be washed. It should be washed in the hottest water possible and then placed in a hot air dryer for at least 20 minutes.

How do I clean my home when there are bed bugs?

The house must be vacuumed using a nozzle attachment. It is important to vacuum all cracks and crevices on your mattress, baseboards and other furniture. Empty your vacuum bag right away and place in a sealed plastic garbage bag. Do not leave the bag in the vacuum cleaner.

Cover your mattress and pillows with a plastic cover. Remove all clutter in your home. Inspect your home for any holes of openings in the walls or baseboards where the bed bugs can hide, especially your bedroom or other areas used for frequent sleeping. These will need to be filled in.

You can monitor for bed bugs after cleaning by placing out carpet tape to catch the bed bugs. If the above methods do not work and you still have bed bugs, then you may need to call in a pest control company to help you.