

# Bed bugs

## What are bed bugs?

Bed bugs are small insects that feed on blood. They are more active at night when people are sleeping. Bed bugs are small so they hide easily. Most often, they hide in the folds of mattresses, furniture, or inside travel bags, purses, laptops and clothes. They are not contagious, but they do spread easily.

## What are the signs of bed bugs?

- Common signs are small bites. They may look like mosquito bites or be small red bumps. They are most common on the face, neck, wrists, ankles, or other exposed body parts. The bites can take a few days to show up.
- Other signs include: dark stains on furniture or sheets, small bugs in the fold of mattresses or sheets, or tiny egg shells, or a sweet musty odor.



## How are the bites treated?

- Keep the area clean. Wash it with soap and water.
- Do not scratch because open sores can lead to infection.
- Talk with your doctor about creams or medicine to help with severe itching.
- Bite symptoms normally go away on their own in 1 to 2 weeks.

## How do you get rid of bed bugs?

- It is hard to get rid of bed bugs. Call your landlord or a professional exterminator if they are in your home.
- If you think there are bed bugs in your clothes or sheets, run them in a dryer on high heat for about 20 to 30 minutes.
- Do not bring them home! Bed bugs are very good at hiding. They fit in small places and move with people when they travel. If you travel a lot it is important to lift up the sheets and look at the mattress right away. Be sure to check used mattresses and furniture before bringing them home.

**ALERT:** Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any concerns or if your child has:

- **Call 9-1-1 if your child has severe allergy symptoms, like throat itching or swelling, or for any wheezing.**
- Severe itching.
- Redness, warmth, pain, swelling, pus or drainage from the bite. These are signs of infection.
- Special health care needs not covered by this information.

**This sheet was created to help you care for your child or family member. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up.**