



# BEDBUGS

<http://www.aocd.org>

Bedbugs (*Cimex lectularius*) are blood-sucking parasites that bite humans while they are sleeping. The parasite is a 0.5 cm, flat, red-brown wingless insect. The insects hide during the day in mattress seams, box springs, floor cracks, or behind peeling paint. Bedbugs are commonly found in homeless shelters, dorms, hotels and homes.

There has been a worldwide resurgence of bedbugs since the late 1990s. This can be attributed to the increase in global travel and trade, expanded immigration, use of recycled mattresses and the number of insecticide resistant bedbugs. Bedbug bites cause itchy, red, swollen bumps usually on exposed areas of the body such as the face, neck, arms, and hands. The bumps can be seen in a cluster or in a linear group of three (known as “breakfast, lunch, and dinner”). Distinct reddish-brown bloodstains on sheets and mattresses and manure near their hiding places can clue you into a bedbug infestation. At present it is believed that bedbugs may be able to transmit trench fever and Chagas disease. Bedbug’s manure may also play a role in asthma.

Complete eradication of bedbugs is challenging and costly. For infested homes the use of professional exterminators is generally advised. They completely eradicate the bedbugs by raising the temperature of the home to 113°F. It is recommended to throw out old furniture, seal the cracks in the floors and walls. Mattresses and upholstered furniture should be sprayed with insecticide, dichlorvos being the best for bedbugs. Linens should be washed in hot water and dried in high heat. After eradication of the parasite, bites should resolve in 1-2 weeks. Oral antihistamines and mild **topical corticosteroids** can be given to control the itching and the bumps.

**This information has been provided to you compliments of the American Osteopathic College of Dermatology and your physician.**

*The medical information provided in this article is for educational purposes only and is the property of the American Osteopathic College of Dermatology. It is not intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice and shall not create a physician - patient relationship. If you have a specific question or concern about a skin lesion or disease, please consult a dermatologist. Any use, re-creation, dissemination, forwarding or copying of this information is strictly prohibited unless expressed written permission is given by the American Osteopathic College of Dermatology. For detailed information including links to related topics on this and many other skin conditions with photos, visit: <https://www.aocd.org/page/DiseaseDatabaseHome>*