

COMBATING BEDBUGS

THE DO'S AND DONT'S

Dealing with bedbugs can be one of the most difficult and stressful experiences one can go through. Thus resulting in many people buying over the counter products, disposing of furniture and even moving. The key to successfully eliminating a bedbug infestation is knowledge. Understanding the problem and knowing what steps to take will help control and quickly eradicate a bedbug infestation.

NOTE: Only a small bedbug infestation can be eliminated without the help of a licensed pest control company and even then it is very rare. It is highly recommended that anyone who finds bedbugs in their home immediately contact's a pest control company for assistance. The following information is not an extermination process but instead a list of things homeowners can do to help pest control, while also controlling and reducing the size of the problem.

WHAT TO DO

USE LESS FURNITURE – Bedbug infestations will begin on a single piece of resting furniture after making its way into your home such as: Beds, chairs and couches. Once there the activity will not travel far on its own, instead they will spread to alternative furniture by hitchhiking on people and items. Limit yourself to just a bed and one chair/couch as to not spread the activity to every piece of furniture in the home. If possible select a chair or couch with less layers and fabrics, as these items will be easier to eliminate an infestation from.

CREATE AN ISLAND – As bedbug infestations develop and alpha males begin to demonstrate aggression, bedbugs will start to spread to alternative nesting locations while remaining close to their food source. This behaviour results in bedbugs migrating into secondary locations such as coffee tables, nightstands and baseboards. To help discourage this movement, isolate your bed and couch by moving them to the middle of the room while moving all additional furniture and items as far away as possible.

BED MOATS AND ENCASEMENTS – Mattress encasements will both trap live bugs inside your bed until they die, while also keeping new activity from nesting deep within where they can be hard to find. Bed moats also known as bedbug interceptors, will stop activity from climbing on your furniture as well as climbing off. Once trapped inside the bed moats bedbugs will eventually die due to the lightly applied chemical inside. Installing both bed moats and mattress encasements will greatly help control and reduce any bedbug infestation.

VACUUM AND STEAM – While awaiting pest controls assistance, many people search for home remedies to quickly decrease the infestation, many of which are ineffective. The most effective solution is vacuum and steam which if done correctly can eliminate up to 99% of the infestation immediately. Vacuum all cracks, folds, crevices, voids, zipper's and stitching on your bed, couch, chairs and any other furniture you sit or sleep on. Afterwards use a steamer on all the same areas as the heat will cook and kill any eggs that the vacuum may have missed. Also be sure to do the same with baseboards, carpets/rugs, secondary furniture or anywhere else you found activity. Afterwards be sure to empty your vacuums filter into a plastic bag that you will then tie tightly and dispose of in outside garbage.

LAUNDRY – As will be requested by your pest control company, take all loose laundry and bedding (for high infestation all bedding and laundry clean or dirty) and wash them on high heat followed by drying on the hottest setting for 50 minutes (or until dry with an additional 30 minutes). Afterwards be sure to place all bedding and clothing in sealed plastic bags or totes as to not re-infest. You will of course need at least one set of bedding and a week supply of clothing to use during the exterminator process. The important part is to ensure that any clothing or bedding you use is again laundered with high heat, as these items can harbour activity and allow it to survive pest controls exterminator process.

REDUCE CLUTTER – As will be requested by your pest control company, eliminate clutter, pick up everything on the floor and remove all items from the infested areas as bedbugs can and will nest or hide on almost anything.

WHAT NOT TO DO

OVER THE COUNTER PRODUCTS – While it may just seem like an effort to maintain business, pest control companies will all strongly recommend against the use of over the counter products such as RAID or KNOCKDOWN to combat your bedbug problem. This is because bedbugs have developed very high resistance to most chemicals available today. Domestic grade pesticides sold in stores contain very low percentages of the active ingredients used to kill bedbugs. Therefore these products have little to no affect on bedbugs and just consume your money. Over the counter products also contain the same active ingredient as the commercial grade pesticides exterminators use, over use of these products can result in the bedbug activity developing resistance, not just to lower grade products but also to some of the commercial products used by pest control, resulting in a much more difficult eradication process and failed treatments.

If you are to use ‘over the counter’ products to kill bedbugs, the only recommended products you use are powders such as Diatomaceous Earth (DE). However, following the label instructions of any DE packing is highly recommended.

HOME VISITATIONS – We all enjoy company however in this case visiting others or having guest visit you can result in spreading the infestation. If people are to come to your home notify them of the problem and recommend that they don’t sit as you can never be certain any spot is completely bedbug free. You should never be ashamed or embarrassed of having bedbugs. Bedbugs don’t discriminate against age, race, cleanliness or financial status and it can happen to anyone. Never be afraid to tell others what you are dealing with or to seek help.

WIPE WASHING AFTER TREATMENT – Having bedbugs can give someone the urge to clean as the infestation tends to make people feel less sanitised then usual. Cleaning is highly recommended before treatment however. Once a treatment by pest control has taken place, it is important not to wipe-wash the following areas. Doing so will remove residual pesticides applied by your exterminator that will continue to work for several weeks.

- Baseboards
- Wood furniture
- Shelves
- Bed frames
- Cracks in the structure
- Heat radiators
- Underside of couches and chairs

CROSS-CONTAMINATE – Typically common with bedding as most people will take a blanket from their bed or couch to another resting location either for use or storage. Any item coming from an infested area will potentially be harbouring bedbug activity. Moving said item to another location in your home if infested would only spread the infestation more quickly.

RE-INFEST – While many times people are unsure where their bedbug infestation came from, some people are aware of exactly where their problem originated. If your infestation came from somewhere you visit frequently, it is important to make sure whoever is responsible addressed their problem, and has been cleared of all activity before returning.

AVOIDING CROSS CONTAMINATION: You must also consider your own infested items. During your extermination you will be asked to pack most if not all items away. A concerning factor is the real possibility of also packing away a bedbug. Once packed the bedbug(s) will survive the exterminator’s treatment, once unpacked you risk re-infesting your home. To avoid this it is important to unpack all items as soon as possible once your final treatment is complete. Doing so will release any packed activity back into the treatment zone where it will quickly come in contact with the pesticide before its affects wear off. Any items you are unable to pack in time should remain packed for 1 year. For this reason it is recommended that people unpack the items they need most first.

Dealing with bedbugs can be difficult. However if you follow these steps, co-operate and listen to your pest control company on any additional request they have, your problem will quickly be gone and you will be able to sleep in peace.

NOTE: Always be completely honest with your pest control company, any misinformation can result in a false understanding of the problem and a prolonged eradication process.