

Bed Bugs: Travel Tips

Carrying bed bugs back home with you after travelling could lead to problems in even the cleanest home. Take the proper steps to avoid bed bug hitchhikers while travelling.

TRAVEL TIPS

- Think about buying the hard, smooth kind of luggage that does not have pockets, a place where bed bugs like to hide. Bed bugs struggle over smooth surfaces and polished metal.
- Ask about any bed bug problems when calling to make a reservation.
- Pack clothes into oversized, sealable plastic bags. Leave the bags inside your luggage during the trip, or hang all clothes in the closet. Never leave clothes on the bed or floor.
- Inspect the room before bringing luggage into the room. Peel back the bed sheets and check the mattress. Run your fingers along the upper and lower seams. Make sure to check the mattress tag, as bed bugs often hide there. You can also look closely at the headboard. Check for blood spots and bed bug droppings. The droppings are dark and look like ink stains. Droppings are often the easiest to see.
- Check the bedside table. Look for signs of bed bugs in the drawers. Look along the wall on the side of the bed that is less likely to be disturbed by cleaning staff and guests.
- Talk to management if you find a problem and request another room. Repeat the inspection in your new room.
- Check your luggage for signs of bed bugs before packing to leave for home. Look carefully at every item as you pack, looking for any bugs or their signs.



*Blood spots and
bed bug droppings*

See reverse for more information

- Unpack outdoors if you need to unpack as soon as you get home. If you don't need to unpack right away, leave your luggage in a garage or a cold area for at least 14 days. When you do unpack, check your luggage (e.g. suitcases, backpack, camera bag) and clothing. Even if you do not find any signs, you might want to put everything into the dryer on the highest setting for at least 30 minutes. Delicates can be put in the freezer for two weeks. You may also want to vacuum all of your luggage.
- Take steps when you get home if you see bed bugs, notice any bed bug bites, or know that you've spent time in a room with bed bugs. Unpack outdoors if you need to unpack as soon as you get home. If you don't need to unpack right away, leave your luggage in a garage or a cold area for at least 14 days. Make sure to vacuum (e.g. suitcases, backpack, camera bag) all luggage. Wash everything washable in hot water and dry on the highest setting for 30 minutes. Put delicates in the freezer for two weeks.
- Contact a professional pest control company to deal with any bed bug problems. Unfortunately, the problem can't be fixed with store bought pesticides. They don't work well. Integrated pest management (IPM) is the best way to deal with bed bugs. This means using different methods and products that cause the least amount of risk to the health of humans and the health of the environment. Visit the Structural Pest Management Association of Ontario (SPMAO) at spmao.ca to locate a licensed company. You may want to ask if they have any experience dealing with bed bugs.

THE ROLE OF THE HEALTH UNIT

You can contact the Health Unit to confirm bed bugs. To speak with a public health inspector, call 625-5930 or 1-888-294-6630, ext. 5930.

You can also bring bugs to the Health Unit for identification. To make it easier:

- Put the bug in a container with a lid; write contact information on the container.
- Don't squish the bug or it may be hard to tell what it is.
- Bring container to 999 Balmoral Street between 8:30am-4:30pm, Monday to Friday.

MORE DETAILED INFORMATION

More detailed information — including fact sheets, videos, photos and links to other valuable resources — can be found on the provincial website bedbuginfo.ca

Fact sheets include:

- Identifying bites
- Bed bug myths

Videos include:

- How to identify bed bugs

