



# BED BUGS: PREVENTION WHILE TRAVELING



Summer is almost here and before you head out on a family trip or even if you travel for work, consider doing a little research so you become familiar with bed bugs. This will help you identify them quickly and it could keep you from bringing them home unknowingly!

Bed bugs are gray to reddish-brown in colour, are oval and flat, and are approximately 1 to 5 mm (1/16" to 3/16") in size. Bed bugs will be closely associated with the bed and surrounding objects such as headboards and end tables.

Keep this in mind when you get to your hotel to make the search process simpler – if you already know what you're looking for before you even check in, you'll be fully prepared.

## Thoroughly check your room

Once you've made it to your hotel room, don't unpack immediately. Perform a thorough inspection to determine if you can find any bed bugs before taking vacancy. This includes checking behind the headboard and in all of the furniture. Make sure you pull back all of the bed sheets, and you may want to consider flipping the mattress. If you find pepper-like stains on any of the furniture, it may be an indication of bed bug activity.

## Keep luggage away from the bed

To minimize the chance of bed bugs following you home, be sure to keep your luggage as far away from the bed as possible. Err on the safe side and consider using a large plastic trash bag to cover your suitcase during your stay. Unfortunately, if your room becomes infested, the bedbugs are bound to be attracted to your suitcase, so keeping it secure can reduce the chance of this happening.

## Notifying management

If you happen to find any traces of bed bugs or something else that makes you suspicious, notify hotel management about looking into bedbug removal. If you are uncomfortable in the room they put you in, it is likely that they will accommodate you by moving you to a new room. But if they do move you, make certain it isn't adjacent to your old room – the infestation could be crawling through the walls and could end up meeting you again.

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## Be cautious at home, too

Just because you've made it home without receiving a bedbug bite, doesn't mean the little critters didn't find their way into your suitcase. It is extremely important to take cautious measures with your suitcase after you return from vacation or a work trip. A good practice is to use a garment hand steamer to steam-clean your suitcase before putting it away in storage – this is a safe, natural way to kill the bed bugs or eggs that made it into your luggage during your trip.

## Wash your clothes

It's just as crucial to be cautious about your clothes as you are about your luggage, according to the source. Make sure you at least dry all of the clothes you took on vacation – even the ones that didn't make it out of the suitcase. Use high heat and dry clothes for 30 minutes to kill all life stages of bed bugs.

Rest easy and enjoy your vacation knowing you have the upper hand with bed bug prevention!

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