

Travel health made simple

6- Bed bugs



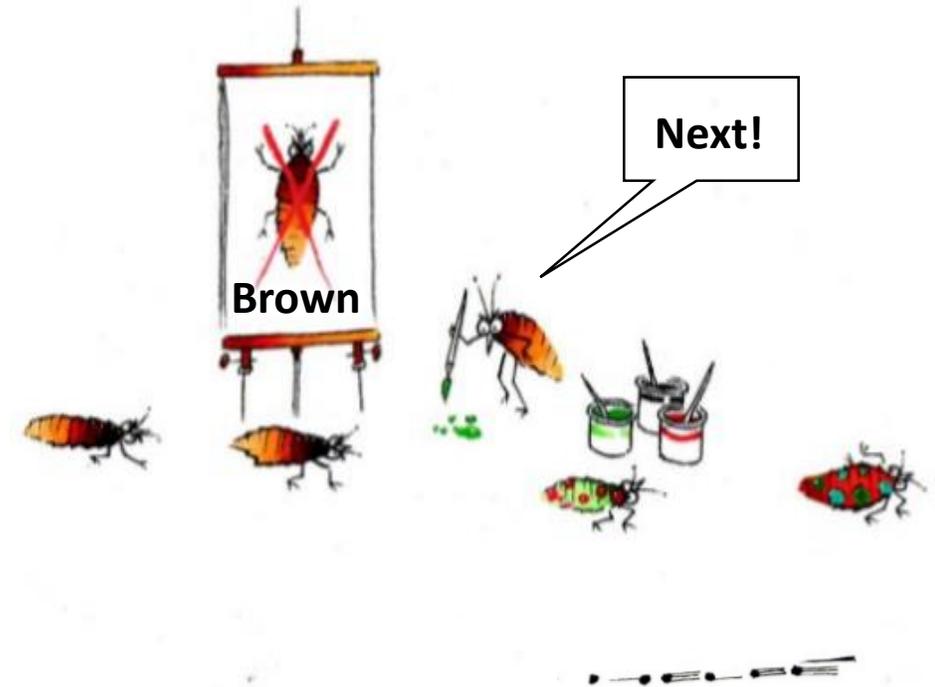
What are bed bugs?

- Bed bugs are small, flat, parasitic insects that feed on the blood of animals and humans while they sleep.
- The common bed bug is known as *Cimex lectularius*. It feeds on human blood.
- The name “bed bugs” refers to the fact that the parasite is found in houses and especially in beds or other areas where people sleep.



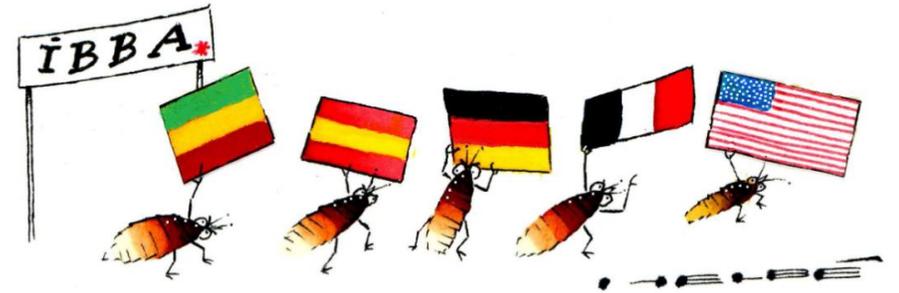
What are bed bugs?

- Bed bugs are reddish brown. Adults measure from 5 to 7 mm in length.
- They are wingless and travel by crawling.
- They are attracted to humans by carbon dioxide and by body temperature.
- Male and female bed bugs feed by sucking blood for about 3 to 5 minutes after having pierced the skin with what is called a “stylet”.



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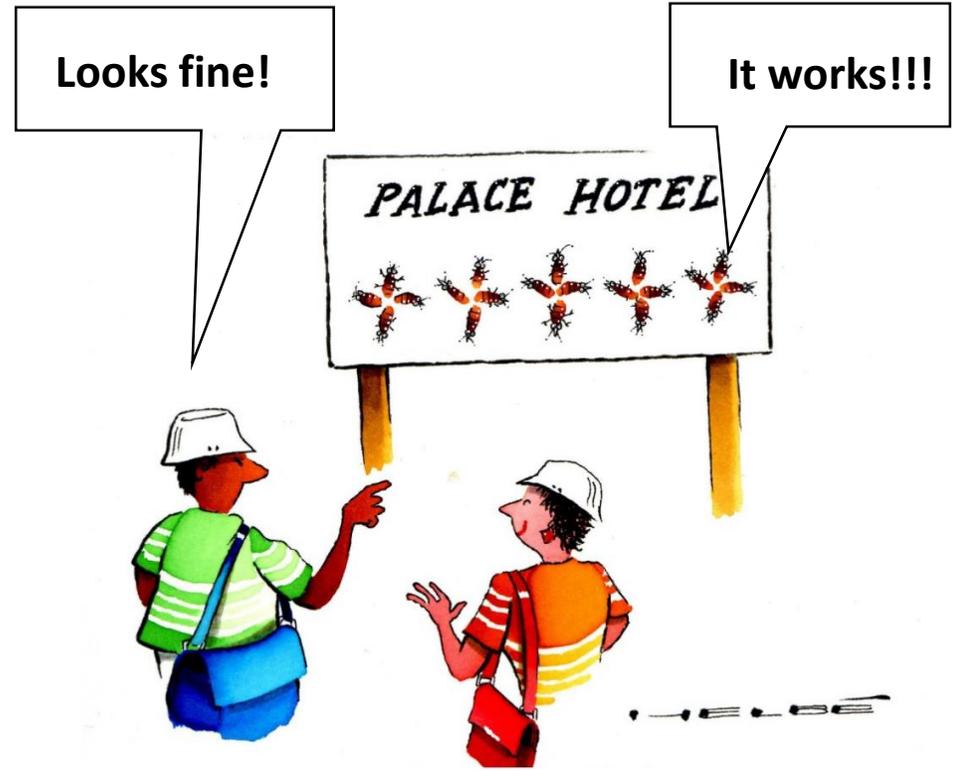
- Bed bugs are found around the world.
- Their incidence is on the increase over the last few years.
- They are very resistant and can live for days at temperatures below -10°C (14°F) and up to 40°C (104°F).
- Bed bugs can live for up to one year without feeding, however, they usually try to feed at least weekly.



* International Bed Bug Association

Where are they found?

- Although usually reputed to be found in places with poor sanitation conditions, they are regularly found in clean environments.
- Crowded places and a nice, warm temperature facilitate their spread.
- They can even be found in 5 star hotels and resorts.

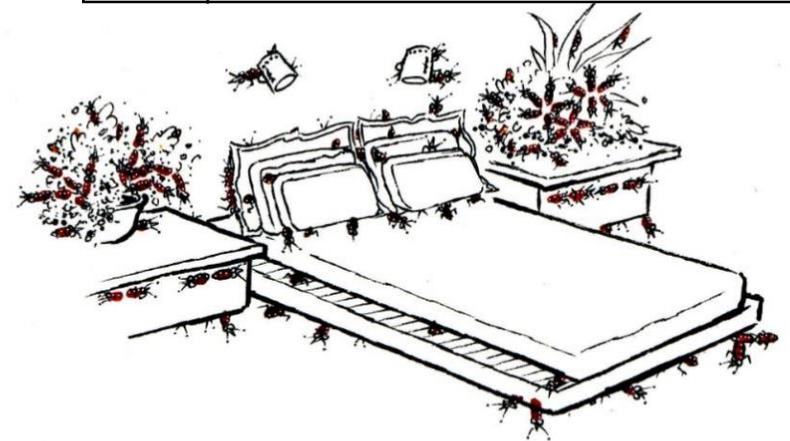


Where are they found?

- They can be found in apartments, rooming houses, hotels, cruise ships, trains, dormitories, etc. – generally around areas where people sleep.
- They hide during the day in beds, mattresses, box springs and bed frames as well as cracks in furniture and in textiles, clothing, carpets and behind wall paper.
- Bed bugs can be brought home by visiting pets, a visiting person's clothing or luggage.

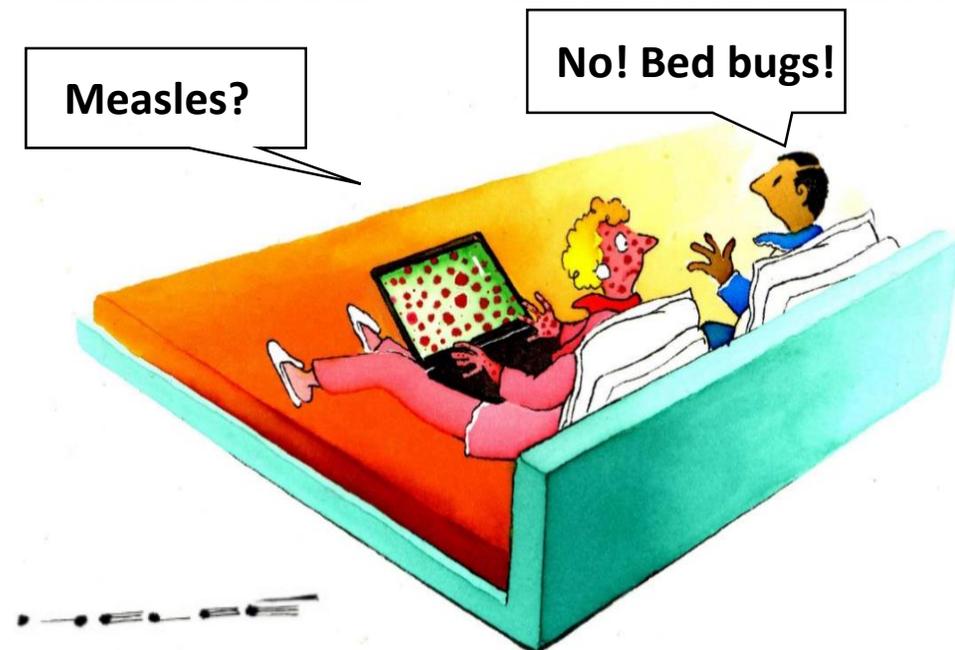


1075 bed bugs hidden in this room



Symptoms

- Bed bugs are mainly active at night and bite exposed areas of the skin while a person is sleeping – face, neck, hands, arms, etc.
- A bed bug bite is usually painless.
- Within one to several days following the bite, a small bump on the skin will appear accompanied by redness, swelling and itching.
- Bed bugs do not spread any disease or pose a medical threat.



Signs of bed bug infestation

- Bed bugs are found in mattresses and sheets or their exoskeletons are found after molting (shedding of their outer layer).
 - Eggs can be hiding in fabric seams.
 - Rusty-colored spots can be found due to the blood-filled fecal material that they have excreted on the mattress.
 - The presence of a sweet musty odor.
- There is no particular treatment for the victim other than applying antiseptic cream or lotion and taking antihistamines to reduce itching.



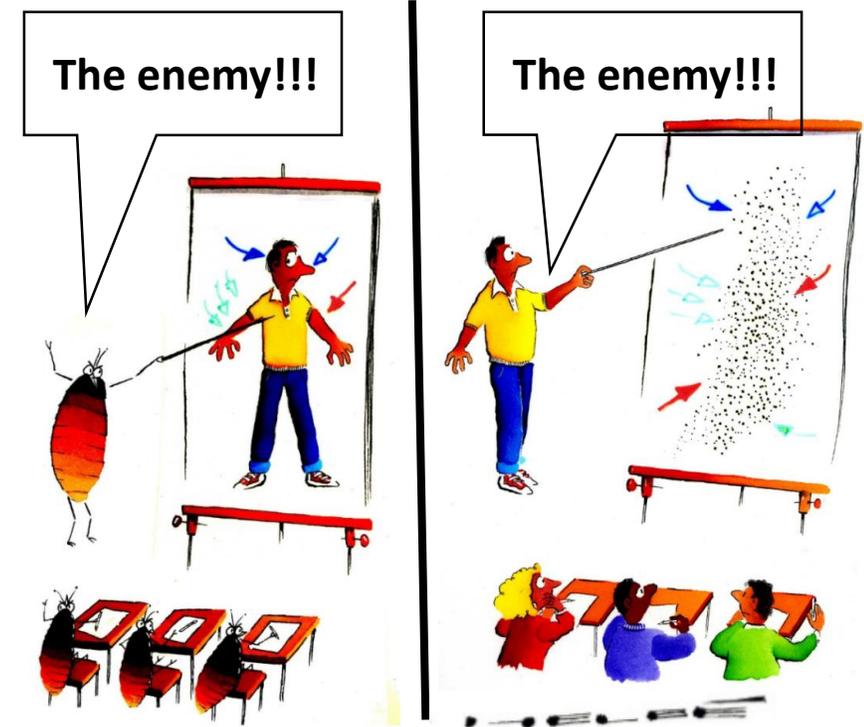
How many children do you want?

Billions!



What to do?

- Getting rid of bed bugs can be rather difficult.
 - Normal insect repellents are ineffective.
 - Turning on the lights or putting the air conditioner on will not get rid of them.
 - Pest control specialists are often required to identify and remove bed bugs from homes or hotels.
 - It is often necessary to discard infested mattresses and beds.
 - Powerful vacuum cleaners and pesticides may also be required for other parts of the house.



Conclusion

- Bed bugs are due to parasitic insects and produce a skin rash.
- They are transmitted by bedding and found around the world, even in the best hotels.
- If it itches see a medical professional and do not forget bed bugs!
- Examine hotel beds and mattresses for signs of bed bugs and if found... sleep elsewhere!

