

EXPERTS  
SPEAK

# IS YOUR HOTEL LINEN FREE OF BED BUGS?

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT BED BUGS

Do you regularly notice small blood stains on the delivered linen?  
This is probably due to the presence of bed bugs.

### WHAT ARE BED BUGS?



*Bed bugs do not grow larger than  
8,5 mm and are red-brown in colour*

Bed bugs (*Cimex lectularius*), are a so-called parasite. Like many other parasites, such as mosquitoes or fleas, bed bugs feed on blood, preferably from humans and usually at night. The bite can cause an allergic reaction resulting in small red dots.



## IDENTIFYING BED BUGS

### Not only in bedtime stories

In recent years, the number of bed bugs infestations has risen explosively. Not only do these parasites occur in hotels, but more and more often we can also find them in people's homes.

#### Causes are:

- An increasing number of **international journeys** allow bed bugs to travel along with tourists coming from tropical areas to the west;
- **resistance** to certain insecticides;
- **global warming**. The bed bug thrives best in warmer areas.

### How can your customer recognize a bed bug infestation?

When changing the bedding always be aware of:

- **Dark spots:** these are the faeces of a bed bug
- **White dots:** these are the eggs of the bed bug but barely visible (1 mm in size).
- **Flakes:** these are moulds from the different stages of the bed bug.
- **Brown/red stains** on the sheets or mattresses: this is caused by crushed bed bugs, blood stains or dried blood.
- **Sweet almond scent:** bed bugs have stink glands and their characteristic smell can be detected together with a blood scent if they are present in large numbers.

### Not to be confused with dust mites

Unlike the bed bug, house dust mites do not cause any problems unless you are **allergic** to them. Dust mites thrive best in places where there are soft fabrics, such as curtains, carpets and also bedding.

	FEEDS ON	WHERE?	SYMPTOMS
BED BUG	human blood	bedding, carpets, behind wall paper	red dots
MANGE MITE	skin cells	the skin	itch
FLEA	animal blood	cats and dogs	irrelevant for humans
LOUSE	human blood	hair	itch

**TIP: PROVIDE A LUGGAGE RACK IN THE ROOM**

Inform your customer to install a separate luggage rack in the hotel rooms. The bed bugs often travel in the luggage of tourists who visit cheap hotels in tropical areas. If the luggage can be placed on a rack, contact with the bedding is avoided.

## TREATING BED BUGS

Recent research has determined the thermal death points (the temperature at which a bed bug dies) for bed bugs and their eggs.

The thermal death point is determined by two things:

- **temperature**
- **exposure time**

Bed bugs exposed to 45°C will die if they receive constant exposure to that temperature for 90 minutes or more. However, they will die within 20 minutes if exposed to 48°C.

Interestingly, bed bug eggs must be exposed to 48°C for 90 minutes to reach 100% mortality.

*Source: Virginia Department of Agriculture and consumer services*

## TREATING BED BUGS IN THE LAUNDRY

Bed bugs but also other parasites such as lice, scabies and fleas are insects and in principle are not killed by disinfectants.

These parasites have a low chance of survival outside the host. Degradation takes place within 48 hours due to dehydration and temperature fluctuations.

In the laundry, it is sufficient for the infested laundry to:

- being washed using a **normal white- or coloured wash process**
- followed by a **drying process** via a tumble dryer, tunnel finisher or mangle. These drying processes all have an additional **thermal disinfection** on top of the washing process because of the achieved temperature **above 60°C**.