

Greater London Pest Liaison Group  
Good Practice Guide



# Beating Bedbugs

Information  
for Residents



Greater London  
Pest Liaison Group

# Beating Bedbugs

Information for residents

## What are they and how do they live?

Bedbugs are brown, blood-feeding insects, measuring up to 6mm long. They are active mainly at night.

Bedbugs hide in crevices in the bed and other furniture, and also behind skirting boards, under loose wall-paper etc. They can survive up to a year without feeding.

Bedbugs may be introduced to a building on second-hand beds or furniture, or on personal possessions.

## What problems do they cause?

Bedbug bites cause red, irritating marks, and some people develop a more severe skin reaction. Many people will experience disturbed sleep.

Bed bugs **do not** spread diseases.

Infestations in the home will spread from room to room.



## How can I reduce the chances of my home becoming infested?

Before moving into accommodation, check for signs of bedbug infestation.

Avoid taking in second-hand bedroom furniture.

If you have stayed in infested premises, then upon returning home, immediately check your luggage for bugs.

To remove all bugs and eggs, clothing and bedding should be either:

- Machine washed at a 'Hot' (60°C) setting;
- Or, tumble dried at a 'Hot' setting for at least 30 minutes;

- Or, placed in a bag in a deep freezer for at least three days;
- Or, dry-cleaned.

Check the label of each garment for laundry advice first.

## What are the signs of bedbug infestation?

Red, irritating bites, often in rows, typically on the neck, shoulders or arms (but there may be other reasons for this).

Small blood-smears on the bed linen or headboard.

Clusters of dark spots (about 1mm diameter) typically on the bed frame or edges of the mattress.

Finding small, brownish insects on the mattress, headboard, bed frame, other furniture, or walls near the bed.



## What should I do if I suspect my home has bedbugs?

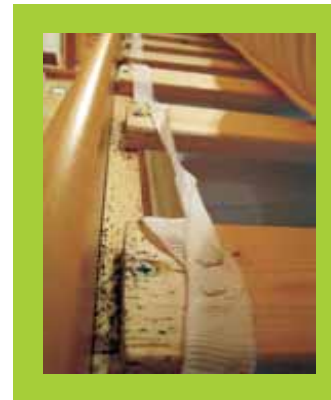
Act immediately, or problems will worsen. Self treatment of infestation is unlikely to be successful.

Contact your local authority pest control section or a professional pest control company for advice and treatment.

If you live in rented property, inform your landlord, who may be able to help.

It is essential to carry out any instructions you are given on preparing your home for treatment.

See your pharmacist or GP for advice on medication for bites.



Greater London  
Pest Liaison Group

## Do you need further information?

**For further advice on bedbug control contact your local authority Environmental Health Department.**

For more information on bedbugs, see the GLPLG's good practice guides on:

- *Preparing your Home for Bedbug Treatment;*
- *Information for Landlords & Property Managers.*

---

## What is the Greater London Pest Liaison Group?

The Greater London Pest Liaison Group is a voluntary Group comprising members from within the Pest Control Departments of a number of Local Authorities from within Greater London. The objective of the Group is to maintain high standards of pest control and to disseminate sound technical information.

---

This document has been prepared by the Greater London Pest Liaison Group and is intended to raise awareness of bedbugs among the public. Whilst it has been produced with great care, the publishers cannot accept any liability for inaccuracies or errors herein.

