simcoe muskoka
DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT

Tel: 705-721-7520
Toll free: 1-877-721-7520
www.simcoemuskokahealth.org
Your Health Connection

Information for Tenants & Homeowners

What to do if bed bugs are in your home

It's Not Your Fault — bed bugs can spread very easily

- Cleanliness is not a factor that deters bed bugs from gaining entry to your home.
- If you live in a house, apartment building, rooming house, or college dorm, bed bugs can easily travel from one area to the next. Because they do not fly, bed bugs can walk through cracks in floor boards or along plumbing and electrical wires to gain entry.
- Talk to someone. If you need help or support, talk to a friend, family member or other support.

How do bed bugs get in to my home?

- Bed bugs can enter your home by attaching on to items such as clothing, bags, luggage or second-hand furniture.
- Try not to pick up any furniture or items from the street and bring them into your home. Careful inspection is necessary to ensure no bugs are present.
- Bed bugs can also enter a home from neighbouring rooms or another apartment. Bed bugs walk along pipes, electrical wires and through cracks in the wall.

What are some signs that I have bed bugs?

- Blood stains, spots or streaks on your sheets from crushed bugs.
- Rusty or tiny black spots on mattresses and mattress seams.
- Egg shells or bug skins on your sheets or bed.
- Bites on your skin. Usually around the neck shoulder and arms. They bite you and take blood like a mosquito. If the bite looks infected seek medical attention.
- During an infestation you may notice a sweet "musty smell."
- Excessive scratching observed from pets.

What do I do if I have bed bugs?

- Ensure the bugs found are properly identified as *bed bugs*.
- Pre-treatment of your unit, apartment or home will be required. Seek help with preparing your place for treatment by asking for the support of family, friends or support worker. Refer to *Bed Bug Pre-treatment Checklist* for more information.

Tenants

- Contact your landlord to arrange for inspection and treatment. It is recommended that a professional pest control service be contracted to treat any infested areas. Sealing of cracks/crevices throughout a unit, apartment or home can help deter bugs from gaining entry.

Homeowners

- If you feel you have an infestation, it is recommended that a professional pest control service be contacted. It is important to have the bugs properly identified so appropriate treatment can be recommended and provided.

Take Action Right Away

- Take a look at your mattress and bed frame - especially underneath and in the folds. This is where bed bugs like to hide.
- Vacuum all the areas of your mattress.
- Empty the vacuum bag right away and place the vacuum bag in a well sealed plastic bag. Dispose of the plastic bag in the outside garbage if possible.
- Seal your pillows and mattresses with a plastic or vinyl cover or bed bug encasement.
- Wash all of your clothes and bedding in hot water and dry on high heat for at least 20 minutes.
- Put all washed and dried clothes in well sealed plastic bags. Keep your clothes in sealed bags until treatment is completed.
- Remove clutter from your home and put discarded items in sealed plastic bags in the garbage.
- Apply petroleum jelly (Vaseline) around each wooden leg of your bed and/or place each leg of the bed in a clean, polished metal can (e.g. old soup cans).
- Metal or plastic bed frames make it harder for the bugs to climb since they are slippery.

After the pest control treatment has taken place

- You may continue to see live bugs for up to 10 days. Use glue boards or double sided tape along door entry ways, around beds and other furniture to help monitor for any bugs.

Tenants

- Arrange for your landlord to caulk cracks and crevices between baseboards, floors and walls; tighten light switch and outlet covers and seal any openings where wires or pipes enter the dwelling. If you see bugs after three weeks, notify your landlord immediately to arrange for additional pest control.

Homeowners

- Caulk cracks and crevices between baseboards, floors and walls; tighten light switch and outlet covers and seal any openings where wires or pipes enter the dwelling. If bed bugs continue to persist, contact a prefessional pest control service again.

Where to find more information

For more information call a professional pest control service. To speak to a public health professional call Health Connection at 705-721-7520 (1-877-721-7520) or visit the following websites:

Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit

- Bed Bugs FAQ
- Myths and Facts about bed bugs
- Bed bugs: A resource for employees
- Bed Bug Pre-treatment Checklist

Health Canada: Bed Bugs - Pest Note

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

Toronto Public Health