

Vermont Department of Health

Bed Bug Protection Tips



Guidance • Support • Prevention • Protection

*Austin Sumner, MD, MPH, State Epidemiologist –
Environmental Health*

August 12, 2009

 **VERMONT**
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

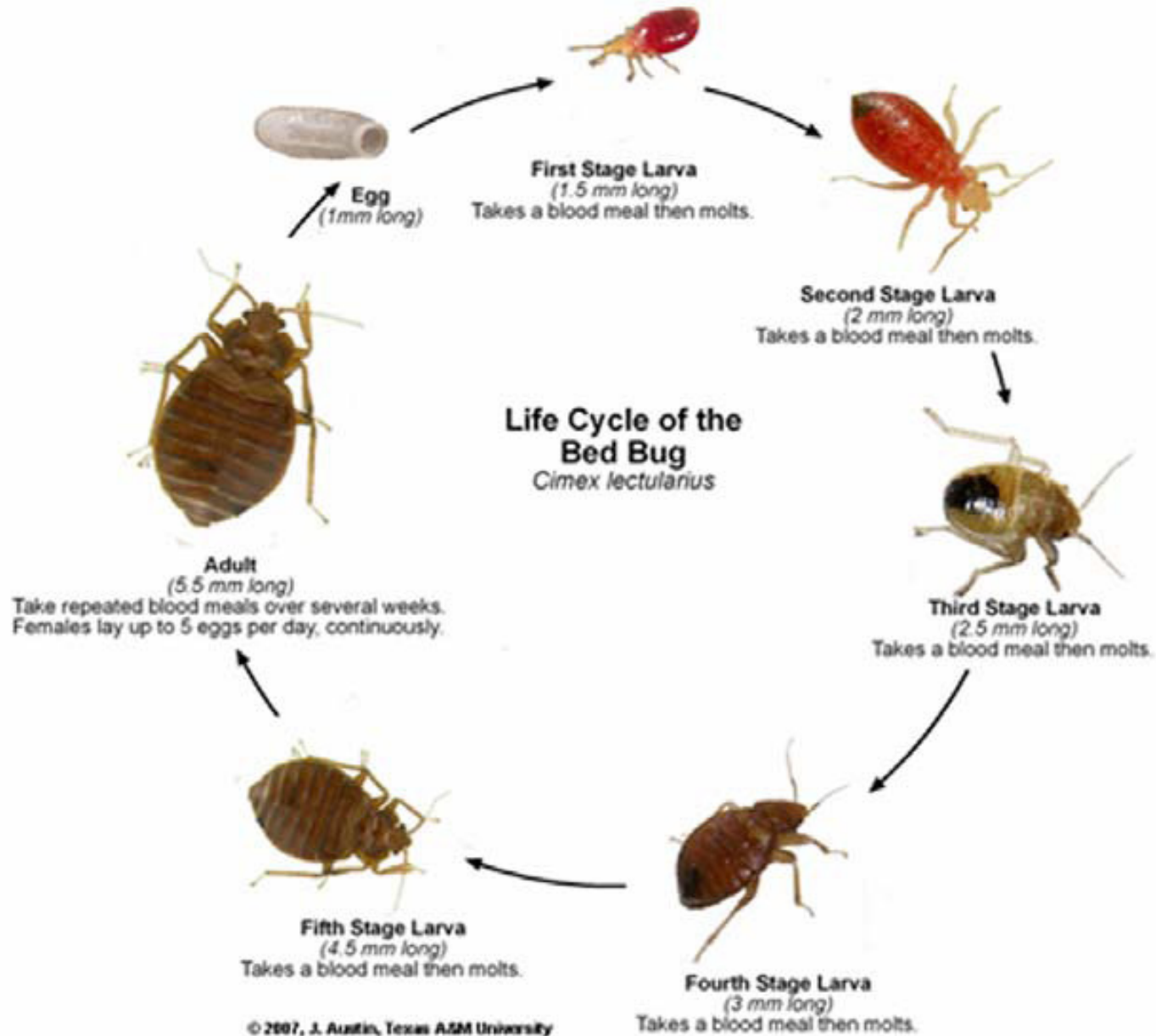


Bed bugs don't play favorites

- Anyone can get bed bugs
- In most cases, people carry bed bugs into their homes unknowingly – in infested luggage, furniture, bedding, or clothing. Bed bugs may also travel between apartments through small crevices and cracks in walls and floors.

What are bed bugs?

- Wingless insects that feed on blood
- Three stages: egg, juvenile, adult
- Small but visible at all stages
- Usually found in beds
- Can be found anywhere in a room
- Can not fly or jump
- Can run fast and climb



What are the health risks?

- Bites - must bite to feed on blood
- Reactions to bites vary widely
- Most common symptom is itchy welts
- Scratching welts may cause infection
- Never shown to pass disease to humans
- If you experience allergic reactions or severe skin reactions, contact your doctor



More about bites

- Bites look similar to other insect bites
- Usually bite exposed skin
- Can bite under loose clothing
- Most often bite at night in the dark
- Under stress may bite during the day

General Protection Tips: Home Visitors

- Carry as few extra items with you as possible
- Do not bring bags or personal items inside
- Consider bringing a portable stool, and sit toward the middle of the room
- If stool not possible, sit on hard chair
- Do not sit on beds or plush furniture
- Check clothing after visit and before entering car
- Put belongings in clear plastic bags

Protection Tips: Field Workers

- Use separate clothes and shoes for field work
- Shake clothes outside before entering car
- Change clothes at work
- Seal field clothes in clear plastic bag for laundering
- Inspect own living and work space regularly

Protection Tips: In the Office

- Limit personal belongings clients bring in
- Limit plush furniture
- Inspect office regularly
- Hire pest control at any sign of bed bugs



Basic Inspection Tips

- Check for small stains on furniture and bedding
- Look for shed skins, amber in color
- Check crevices
- Check screw and nail holes
- Turn over furniture to check underside
- Pull out drawers and inspect all sides



Protection Tips: Maintenance Workers

- Wear Tyvek suit or other coveralls
- Seal coveralls in plastic bag after use and discard
- Dedicate a vacuum for pest control

Getting Rid of Bed Bugs

- Clean and organize living area
- Reduce clutter
- Bag and remove bedding and clothes
- Use HOT dryer for 30 minutes for plush toys, shoes, coats
- Isolate clean items until bed bugs are gone
- Caulk holes in floors and walls
- Consider getting mattress and pillow covers

Cleaning

- Scrub mattress seams with stiff brush
- Vacuum mattresses, bed frames, furniture, floors, and carpets - especially around bed and furniture posts
- Put vacuum cleaner bag in a sealed plastic bag immediately after vacuuming
- Dispose of sealed bag in outside container
- Clean linens, curtains, rugs, carpets, and clothes
- Wash and dry bedding and clothes on HOT

Avoiding Pick Up and Spread

- Inspect luggage after traveling
- Wash donated clothing on HOT before wearing
- Do not pick up discarded items on the street
- Inspect any used furniture or other purchases
- Wrap infested items in plastic before discarding
- Deface infested items to prevent reuse
- Label discarded items “infested with bed bugs” to prevent reuse

For More Information

Visit HealthVermont.gov

or Dial 2-1-1