

Let's Beat the Bug!

Bed Bug Basics

- Bed bugs are small insects, about the size of an apple seed. Adult bed bugs are flat, oval and reddish-brown in color. Juvenile bed bugs can be very small and hard to see.
- Bed bugs feed on human blood and can live for over a year without a meal.
- Bed bugs usually hide during the day near where people rest or sleep and then come out at night to feed. Bed bugs do not live on our bodies.
- Some people do not react when bitten by a bed bug.
- Most bed bugs are found within 8 feet of a person's resting place. As the infestation grows, bed bugs will spread further. You can find bed bugs in any of the following places:
 - In mattresses, box springs, bed frames, and bedding
 - In the cracks and crevices of furniture
 - Behind peeling wall paper
 - Behind pictures and clocks
 - In curtains
 - In cracks in hardwood floors
 - Under carpeting
 - Behind electrical outlets or switch plates

For more information contact the Bed Bug InformationLine at 612-624-2200, 1-855-644-2200 bedbugs@umn.edu, or visit www.bedbugs.umn.edu

Using Freezing Conditions to Kill Bed Bugs

Putting infested items in a freezer can kill bed bugs if some particular conditions are met. Freezing causes ice to form inside the bed bug, causing injury or death. Freezing bed bugs is easy to do. All it requires is:

- ✓ A freezer that is at or below 0°F (-18°C)
- ✓ Time
- ✓ Some plastic bags to put the items you want to freeze into
- ✓ A remote thermometer



There are some things to think about to ensure that freezing is effective and does not cause damage to items you are freezing.

What can be frozen?

Most dry household items can be frozen, including:



- cloth items that you cannot (or do not want to) wash or launder
- modern books
- shoes
- jewelry
- pictures
- toys
- electronics without an LCD screen

What should I not freeze?

There are a few items that require caution when attempting to freeze or that should not be frozen. Do not freeze:

- electronics with LCD panels
- historic artifacts or old books of considerable value
- items that cannot be replaced
- items that may be damaged if condensation occurs
- items that contain high moisture or liquids inside

You should talk to a Pest Management Professional about treating these items

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What temperatures are required?

The temperature of your freezer is very important. Do not try to freeze items in a freezer that does not reach 0°F.

- Freezers set to 0°F are effective in killing bed bugs, but the things you are freezing must be left in the freezer for at least 4 days.
- If you are worried about ensuring that temperatures are low enough, use a remote thermometer and monitor the temperature inside the items you are freezing.
- 0°F must be reached in the center of the materials being frozen to kill bed bugs. Bulky items require more time. Start counting the 4 day exposure time when the center of the object has reached 0°F.
- Do not use temperatures above 0°F (-18°C) as eggs and small bed bugs may survive.



Its winter, and it's cold, can I simply put my stuff outside or open the windows in my home to kill bed bugs?

Unfortunately, no. It is unlikely that it will be cold enough for long enough to kill bed bugs. Sunlight, humidity, and temperature variations during the day increase the risk that bed bugs will survive. DO NOT attempt to freeze your apartment or house by opening the windows and turning off the heat. There is a major risk that structural damage will occur and you will not kill the bed bugs.

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By Amelia Shindelar and Dr. Stephen Kells, 2011

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In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, this information is available in alternative forms of communication upon request by calling 651/201-6000. TTY users can call the Minnesota Relay Service at 711 or 1-800-627-3529.

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