

# BED BUGS

Bed bugs have been spreading in our building. Here's what you need to know.

## The Good News

Bed bugs don't spread disease.

They can be beat. (Absolutely. This is easiest when they are caught early, but they can be beat in all cases.)

## The Bad News

Eliminating them can be expensive and difficult for all of us, building management and residents.

They spread between apartments and floors.

They sometimes spread undetected because:

- they hide extremely well in small, tight cracks and gaps (hatched bed bugs are the size of the thickness of a plastic store discount card), and usually (but not always) come out to feed (suck our blood) when we are asleep; even if we are awake, we often cannot feel the bite as it is happening
- the eggs and the early instar nymphs (bed bugs have 5 nymphal stages before adulthood) are hard to see with untrained eyes
- not everyone develops skin marks or itching and swelling in response to the bites (and even if we do, sometimes these bite responses—which look and feel different from person to person—only appear with time and may not make us think of bed bugs)

## Prevention

Our defenses include:

- avoiding furniture from the street
- learning to inspect in order to catch a problem at home early and recognize the signs of bed bugs in infested places away from home



Adult bed bug, eggs, and recently hatched nymphs, plus dark and light waste on 1/4-inch graph paper. Photo: Lou Sorokin. More photographs at [http://www.flickr.com/photos/lou\\_bugs\\_pix/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/lou_bugs_pix/)

- keeping each other informed about bed bug problems in the building

## Common Mistakes

Not communicating about the problem with the building makes it difficult to coordinate inspections and treatments and keep the bed bugs from moving from apartment to apartment.

Foggers ("bug bombs") and some store-bought sprays irritate and make bed bugs move from their hiding spots—spreading them to new places in our homes and to other apartments in the building.

Throwing away infested belongings, furniture, and beds is often unnecessary and:

- spreads bed bugs to others who pick up our stuff from the trash (good practice: wrap well in plastic, write warning signs, and if possible deface to make unattractive)
- may not solve the bed bug problem (because not all bed bugs are in the items being thrown out)

- spreads bed bugs as we move things out of the infested rooms and drag unsealed items throughout the home (and down hallways and stairs)

## Tenant Meeting

We'll share what we know about how to inspect and monitor to confirm an infestation, consider next steps in working with the landlord and pest control company, and discuss the pros and cons of strategies such as pest-proofing our apartments, encasing box springs and/or mattresses, using desiccant dusts, and more.

Date:

Time:

Location:

Contact: