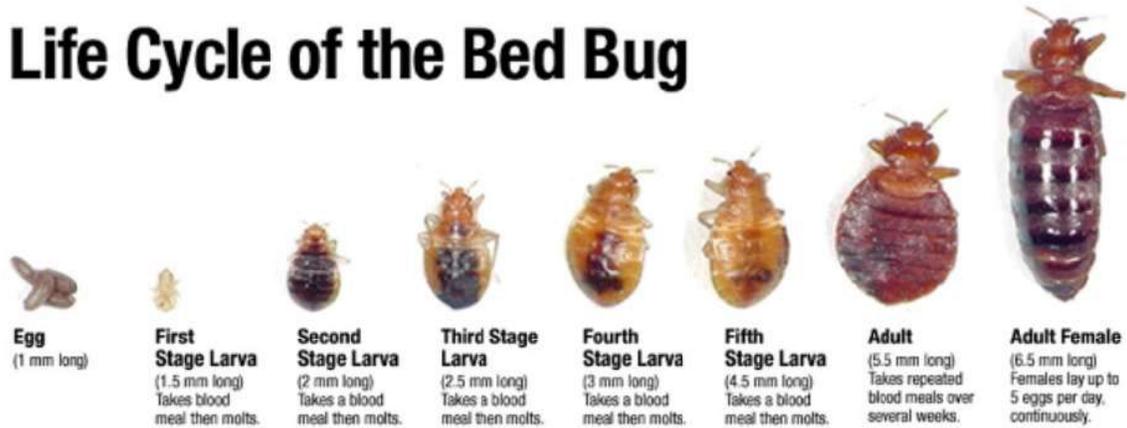


BED BUG FACTS

Life Cycle of the Bed Bug



Young Bed Bugs are called nymphs. Ideal conditions for feeding are when temperatures are roughly above 70 degrees F. Bed Bugs grow by molting several times. Nymphs look very much like the adults, except they are smaller and not sexually mature. There are five nymph molts, and each nymph must have a blood meal to be able to molt to the next stage.

Eggs are deposited in batches of about 10 to 50 in crevices of bed frames, floors, walls, window sills, door & closet frames and similar household areas. When fresh, the eggs are coated with a sticky substance that causes them to adhere to any object on which they are deposited. Eggs are not deposited at temperatures lower than 50 degrees F. Eggs normally hatch in about 6 to 17 days but may take up to 28 days in cooler temperatures. The nymphs begin to feed as soon as they can locate a blood meal (host). They molt (5) five times before reaching maturity and the nymph period lasts about (6) six weeks. There can even be up to three generations per year in our climate.

Bed Bugs feed for a period of 3 to 5 minutes, after which they are engorged and

drop off the host. They crawl into a hiding place and remain there for several days digesting the blood meal. When hungry again, they emerge from the hiding place and search for a host. If no food is available, the new nymphs may live for several weeks or longer in warm temperatures, or several months in cool temperatures.

Adult Bed Bugs may live as long as one year without food (blood meal). During the daytime they tend to hide where people sleep. Their flattened bodies allow them to hide very well in tight cracks and crevices especially those associated with mattresses, box springs, bed frames and headboards. Bed Bugs do not have nest like ants or bees but do tend to congregate in habitual hiding places. Characteristically, these areas are marked by dark spotting and staining, which is the dried excrement of the bed bug. Also present will be eggs and eggshells, the brownish molted skins of maturing nymphs and the adult bed bug themselves. Another evident sign is rusty or reddish blood smears on bed sheets or mattresses from crushing an elongated (currently feeding) Bed Bug.

Heavy infestations may have a buggy smell but the odor is not often apparent and should not be the only detection method. Bed Bugs prefer to linger close to where they feed. However, if necessary, they will crawl several feet to obtain a blood meal and can become scattered throughout the bedroom, occupying any crevice or protected location. They also can spread to adjacent rooms or apartments via wall voids and pipelines.

The feeding time normally occurs at night when people are sleep due to the nocturnal nature of the bed bug. They feed by piercing the skin with an elongated beak through which they withdraw blood. Engorgement takes about three to ten minutes, yet the person seldom knows they are being bitten. Some individuals have different allergic reaction to the protein found in the Bed Bug saliva. A colorless wheal or lump develops

at the bite location; in contrast, flea bites have reddish centers. Discomfort from Bed Bug bites could last a week or more. Occasional bites indicate a beginning light infestation of adults; many bites result from a heavy, long-standing population of nymphs and adults. Flea bites mainly occur around the ankles, Bed Bugs however feed on any part of the exposed skin (face, neck, legs, back, arms, shoulders, etc.). Bites are often confused with mosquitoes. For this reason, the infestation goes a long time unnoticed, and can rapidly become large before being detected.