



BED BUGS

HOW TO RID THEM FROM
YOUR HOME

The first version of this booklet was created by Port Phillip Community Group in 2009 and supported by the City of Port Phillip.

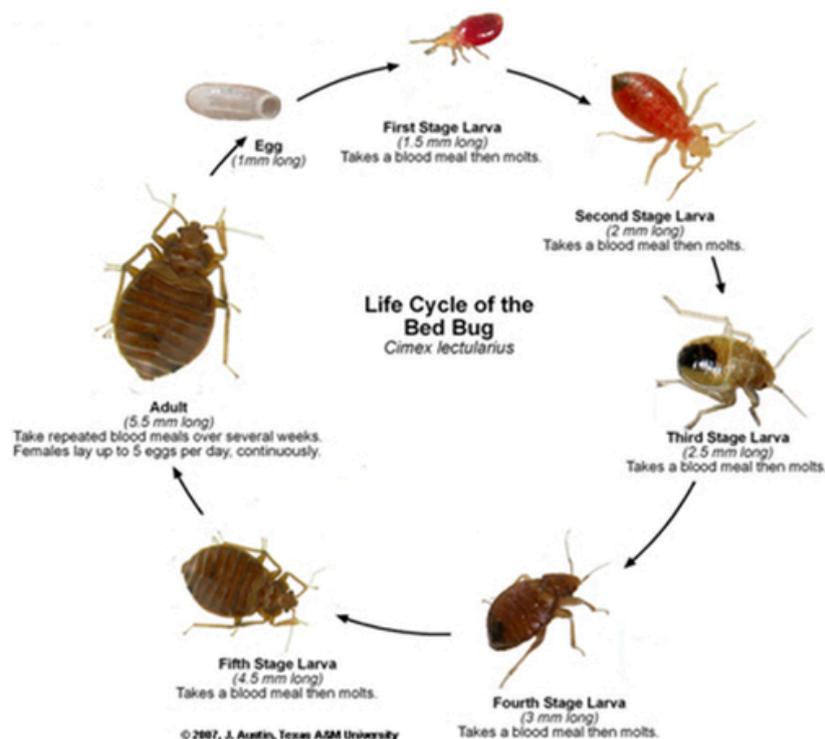
The 2026 edition was updated by Port Phillip Community Group and Better Health Network, with support from Better Health Network consumers.

Digital copies of this booklet are available on the PPCG website.

Are bed bugs in your home?

You might have bed bugs in your home if:

- Bites occur mainly at night.
- Bites appear in neat rows.
- Bites are raised, red, swollen and itchy.
- You discover small bloodstains on your bedding.
- You physically see the bedbugs (though it's important to note that they can be hard to find, so you won't always see them).



How do bed bugs spread?

Bed bugs like to hide in small spaces and thrive in clutter.

They can spread in built up housing such as apartment blocks or rooming houses.

They can spread through clothing, furniture, shoes and bags.

They can also spread through walls, heating, cooling and ventilation ducts.

MYTH BUSTER

Bed bugs don't mean that your house is dirty. They can get into clean homes too!

Dealing with bed bugs

The most effective ways to treat bed bugs is through **professional pest control treatment**.

If you live in **public and social housing**, you can contact your housing manager to organise the treatment.

If you live in a **private rental**, you will likely need to pay for the treatment yourself. However, if you think the bed bugs are caused by a building or structural issue, then speak to your rental provider.

IMPORTANT

Avoid using over-the-counter sprays as these are ineffective and can have negative health impacts.

Pest control checklist

Day before the treatment

- Tidy up as much clutter as possible, remove items from floor.
- Move furniture away from the walls.
- Vacuum the floor and soft furniture.
- Empty vacuum cleaner into a sealed plastic bag and dispose in outside bin.

Day of the treatment

- Wash clothing, bedding and, if possible, curtains in hot cycle (60 degrees) and put in dryer if available.
- Once washed and dry, place these items in sealed, black plastic bags.

After the treatment

- Keep your clean items in sealed plastic bags until after two treatments.
- Avoid vacuuming sprayed areas for two weeks.
- If you replace your mattress, do so before the second treatment.

Self-care

Caring for your bites

- Resist the urge to scratch.
- Wash with antiseptic soap.
- Use an ice pack to relieve swelling.
- See your pharmacist for recommended treatment.
- See your doctor if bites develop an infection (swelling, redness, warm to touch) or if you have an allergic reaction to the bites (bites will look like large welts).

MYTH BUSTER

Bed bugs do not spread disease between humans, and they cannot cause serious harm to life.

Self-care

Caring for mental health

For many people, dealing with a bed bug infestation can cause **anxiety, sleep disturbance, social isolation and depression**. If you are feeling that your mental health is being impacted, help is out there.

Your GP can help you with a **mental health care plan** to link you in with the right supports. Otherwise, you can phone **Beyond Blue** or **Lifeline** to chat to a counsellor.

PHONE COUNSELLING

Beyond Blue:

1300 22 46 36

Lifeline:

13 11 14

Preventing bed bugs from returning

- Keep your home clutter free. Vacuum and remove rubbish regularly.
- Washing clothes and bedding on 60-degree cycle will kill bed bugs at all life stages.
- Buy a mattress encasement to help keep bed bugs out of your bed.
- Avoid storing items under your bed.
- Seal cracks in your furniture and walls.
- Avoid picking up second-hand items from the street as bed bugs might be living in them.

Helpful contacts

Information, Referrals & Support

Port Phillip Community Group

P: 8598 6600

E: info-support@ppcg.org.au

Community Health

Better Health Network

P: 132 246

E: info@bhn.org.au

Tenancy Advice

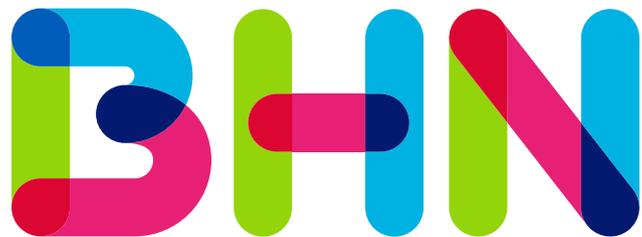
Tenants Victoria

Private Rental Support Line

P: 9416 2577

Public/Social/Rooming House Priority Line

P: 1800 068 860



Better Health **Network**

