

# How Bedbugs Get Into Your Home

## *Bedbugs in Your Bed, Your Sofa, Your Carpet!*

By: R. Renée Bembry

Whether you live in a house an apartment or a high-rise hotel – bedbugs can get into your home. You do not have to be poor or middle class – you can be rich and still get bedbugs. These bloodsucking hemipteran insects do not discriminate against wealthy or unwealthy and they like houses, apartments, hotels and motels, dormitories, and cruise ships equally the same. In fact, even if you live in a trailer, on a boat, or in a hut – bedbugs will not mind living in your home with you.

Another thing about bedbugs is, despite the fact that we call them bedbugs and we tend to think of their biting humans while in a bed, bedbugs can bite just as well if you sleep on a sofa, a chair, a hammock, or on the floor.

Of the many types of bedbug species, *Cimex lectularius*, or common bedbugs are the type most likely to invade human households. This is because common bedbugs are more adaptable to human environments than other types of bedbugs.

Bedbugs are able make their way into our homes for several reasons. They are small and barely noticeable. Their bodies are flat like pancakes. This flatness allows them to squeeze into small places. They generally hide during the day, which further lessens chances humans will discover them. Their hiding places include cracks and crevices in walls and floors, undersides of furniture, folds of mattresses, behind molding and between wall-to-wall carpet folds.

As with other animal life, bedbug living quarters can become overcrowded. This is no surprise since females lay as many as five eggs daily and it only takes about a month for bedbugs to mature and start reproducing.

Overcrowding spurs bedbugs to thin out their nests. They accomplish this thinning in several different ways, including making their way into luggage and purses and other personal human affects. They crawl under doorjambes to spread their horizons in apartments, condominiums, hotels and motels. They crawl through unsealed holes in walls and flooring and pipe fixtures in order to enter unpopulated rooms.

Movement from room to room, apartment to apartment, condo-to-condo, et cetera allows bedbugs to expand their population within the same building complex; and, as you can see, this expansion can take place within the same residence or branch out to different residences within the same buildings.

When bedbugs "hitchhike" via people's luggage and other personal items, they can expand their horizons a lot further than an adjacent room or apartment. Hitchhiking allows bedbugs to get into homes in other cities other states and other countries.

Traveling bedbugs can move from one person's luggage to another person's luggage while luggage is contained in airplane bellies and even within airplane cabins. In fact, bedbug movement from one personal item to another may be more likely to occur in plane cabins because these are areas people are most likely to have items like purses, computer bags, shopping bags et cetera unsealed because they are using them – or less concerned about securing them. Similar traveling scenarios can occur when bedbugs hitchhike on trains, boats, ships, buses and so on.

Once persons carrying hitchhiking bedbugs arrives home and places their luggage or other bedbug contaminated items down,

bedbugs only have to wait for nightfall to seek out human (or pet) blood-meals and hiding places in their new homes.

Bedbugs can also get into your home in items such as used furniture, pillows, and clothing. For this reason, thorough inspection of such goods is imperative and should be conducted prior to purchasing these and similar items and most certainly before bringing them into your home.

Never assume that used items must be free of bedbugs in situations where humans and other warm-blooded animals have not been around to "feed them". Adult bedbugs can survive for as many as eight months without blood feedings.

Now that you have this info on how bedbugs get into your home, it is easy to see how money and class has nothing to do with acquiring these bloodsucking little buggers. In order to keep these critters from hijacking in your and your family's luggage and other personal items, it is a good idea to take steps to keep your luggage sealed when not in use and to learn how to check for bedbugs when staying in hotels, motels, resorts, and other places away from home.