

BBB Advice on Keeping Pesky Bed Bugs at Bay and out of Your Home

It appears that the bed bug infestation has hit homes once again. These pesky little critters are not only latching onto your beds, but to your wallets as well. Some self-proclaimed bed bug eradicators are coming into your home with the intention to only take your money and not actually rid you of your critter problem. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and Better Business Bureau are advising consumers on ways to ultimately prevent bed bug infestations from stepping "foot" in your home.

In just this year alone, BBB has received over 375 complaints against pest control service companies. In a recent October release, BBB recommended [tips](#) for choosing a trustworthy pest control company to banish bedbugs. This time, BBB, along with the FTC are advising consumers on ways to prevent a bed bug problem from taking over your home in the first place.

"While it may be easier said than done, it's always important for consumers to know *how* to prevent and control a pest problem," said Stephen A. Cox, President and CEO of the Council of Better Business Bureaus. "Preventing the problem, prevents the possibility of a pest control scam."

BBB and the FTC urge consumers to be proactive when it comes to preventing bed bugs from entering your home.

Inspect, inspect, insect? If you recently purchased furniture from a secondhand store or flea market, make sure that your purchase doesn't actually have "fleas," or in this case, bed bugs, before bringing it into your home.

Take out the "hide" in hide-and-go-seek. Keeping bed bugs from being able to hide is important. Only enclose mattresses and box springs in covers labeled "allergen rated," "for dust mites," or "for bed bugs." Make sure to periodically check for rips or openings so that you can patch them up securely. That also includes repairing cracks in plaster, loose wallpaper and any loose light switch covers and being proactive by always making sure to apply caulk to seal crevices, joints in baseboards and gaps on shelves or cabinets.

Don't be a hitchhiker. When traveling, use luggage racks to hold your suitcases when packing and unpacking rather than setting your luggage on the bed or floor. When staying in a hotel, check the mattress and headboard before getting into bed. Keep the critters from infesting your home by unpacking directly into a washing machine. Wash all items showing bed bug stains, and dry on the highest setting for at least 20 minutes. The heat from the dryer kills the bugs. Before relaxing, inspect and then vacuum your luggage. Empty the vacuum or seal and dispose of its bag outside of your home after each use.

For more tips on choosing a trustworthy pest controller or to learn more about keeping bed bugs out of your home, visit www.bbb.org, the FTC's consumer alert www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/alerts/alt194.shtm and the National Pesticide Information Center www.npic.orst.edu/pest.htm.