

BED BUGS – TRAVEL TIPS

Before booking a hotel room, you may want to read user reviews of the particular hotel and location — frequently, guests who've had bug problems report them online. One site is www.bedbugregistry.com.

Bear in mind that a report about a hotel does not mean the issue was isolated to one room, nor is it an indication of whether the issue has been resolved.

Check for telltale signs:

- Peel back the bed sheets and check the mattress, running your fingers along the upper and lower seams. Make sure to check the mattress tag, bed bugs often hide there.
- Experts recommend removing and examining the headboard if possible. Check for tiny black spots (excrement) that are smaller than poppy seeds. You may also see translucent light brown skins or, in the case of an infestation— live bugs.
- Check the bedside table. Look for signs of bed bugs in the drawers and along the wall on the side of the bed that is less likely to be disturbed by cleaning staff and guests.
- You may want to elevate suitcases and keep them off the floor, like on a luggage stand.
- If you see powder in the drawers or on the headboard, it is likely that the room has already been treated for bed bugs by an exterminator.
- If bed bugs are detected, travelers should request for another room. Be sure to inform hotel management.
- Just moving to a different room may not be the total answer. You should repeat the thorough inspection of any new or different room you are offered.
- When you pack to leave, inspect your luggage carefully first, and inspect every item as you pack to help detect any bugs or their signs. Laundering most cloth items with typical hot water and detergent followed by drying on low heat for at least 20 minutes (or standard dry cleaning) should kill all bed bugs in or on such items. Sealing freshly-laundered items inside a plastic bag should help keep any more bed bugs from getting in those items later to hide (and be carried back with you).