Notify your landlord immediately. You will NOT be able to get rid of bed bugs alone. The longer you wait, the harder it will be to get rid of them. Many landlords understand that bedbugs are a shared problem and will want to know about it as soon as possible.

Getting rid of bed bugs requires the combined efforts of the tenant, landlord and qualified pest control company.

Carefully follow instructions provided by your landlord and/or the pest control company. These instructions may include disposing of clutter, washing clothing and stuffed animals and then drying them on ‘high’ for 30 minutes. Without the help of a professional, you will not be able to eliminate bed bugs from furniture.

WHEN YOU TRAVEL

Check your hotel room. Look carefully at the bed and then at furniture and areas around the bed: the night stand, lamps, paintings, loose wallpaper, baseboards, electrical sockets, and if you can, the headboard. If you find bed bugs or their evidence, request to be moved and inspect that room also.

Keep your suitcase in the bathtub or in a sealed plastic bag.

When you get home, open your suitcase outside the house and put the contents of your luggage into a plastic bag. Check your luggage carefully with a bright light and magnifying glass before bringing it inside.

Wash everything you can. If you can’t wash some clothing, put the dry items into the dryer for 30 minutes on ‘high’. Carefully inspect any other belongings you had with you.

For more information: go to the Contra Costa Health Services Department website: http://www.cchealth.org/ipm or call 925-313-6740

Adult bed bugs on a sheet showing typical staining. Photo by H.J. Harlan
DO YOU THINK YOU HAVE BED BUGS?

WHERE BED BUGS HIDE

- Bed bugs can hide in almost any crack or crevice.
- At first, they hide in and around the bed, but as the infestation grows, they spread through the room.
- Look for bed bugs in places such as
  - Along seams in the mattress or box springs
  - In cracks & crevices in the headboard, bed frame, box springs, night stand, and other furniture
  - In cracks & crevices in the floor, walls, baseboards, windows, and doors
  - Behind pictures and other objects hanging on the wall.
- Bed bugs can also hide in purses, backpacks, luggage, clothing, books, and other items, which makes them easy to move around accidentally.

DESCRIPTION AND HABITS

- Bed bugs feed on the blood of humans and sometimes other warm-blooded animals, including pets.
- They are active mainly at night and hide during the day. They cannot fly or jump, but they can run quickly.
- Adult bed bugs are small, oval, flattened insects, smaller than an apple see, but somewhat similar in color. After feeding, their bodies become longer and more rounded.
- Their whitish eggs are so tiny they are hard to see without a magnifying glass.
- Eggs hatch into tiny nymphs. As they grow, they shed their skin 5 times before reaching maturity.
- Bed bugs can survive for 3 to 5 months without feeding.

SIGNS OF AN INFESTATION

- **Bites:** Some people develop itchy welts, but others have no reaction at all. Bites occur on any bare skin exposed while sleeping.
- **Dark rusty or reddish spotting or staining:** These spots of digested blood may be found on sheets, mattresses, walls, and other areas.
- **Live bugs, eggs, eggshells, and shed skins from growing nymphs.**

Remember that bites alone do not mean a bed bug infestation. Confirmation requires finding and identifying the bugs themselves.

Contra Costa County
Bed Bug Task Force
http://www.cchealth.org/ipm