

# How to Make Your Bed a Safe Haven from Bed Bugs

## 1. Investigate all parts of your bed very carefully and thoroughly.

- If you find the infestation early, most of the bugs will be in the headboard, mattress and box springs.
- A bright light (and a magnifying glass if you have one) will make it easier to see the bugs.
- Start by inspecting the headboard and then the rest of the bed frame. Look at every screw, staple crack and crevice.
- Next, inspect the mattress and box springs.
  - Concentrate on seams and folds in the fabric.
  - Turn the box springs over and remove the thin cloth cover on the bottom so you can inspect the inside.
- If you find bed bugs, it may be easier to enclose the mattress and box springs with special, high quality mattress covers with zippers. These are often labeled “hypoallergenic” or “dust mite proof.”
- Use mattress covers made of fabric. Plastic covers can rip and can trap moisture making you and your sheets uncomfortably damp at night.
- If you can only afford one cover, use it on your box springs, which have the most hiding places.

## 2. If you find any bed bugs or eggs, you can get rid of them in several ways:

- Suck up the bugs with a vacuum cleaner. When you have completed your inspection, discard the vacuum bag or the contents of the collection cup in a plastic bag and close it with a knot. It’s hard to vacuum up eggs because they are glued on. You will have to scrape them up with the nozzle of the vacuum.
- Clean up the bed bugs or eggs using a solution of dish washing liquid and water. Spray the bugs you see with the soapy water to slow them down. Pick them up and place them in a bowl of soapy water where they will drown. You can scrape off eggs and put them in the bowl. Flush the soapy water down the toilet when you are finished.

- Use hot air from a hair dryer set to “low” to force bugs out of cracks and crevices. If live bugs come out, spray them with the soapy water and put them in your bowl of soapy water.

## 3. Wash all your bedding in hot water. Dry on “high” for at least 30 minutes.

Be sure to transport the bedding to the laundry in a sealed plastic bag so you don’t scatter the bugs. Tie up and throw away the old plastic bag and bring clean laundry back home in a new plastic bag. You can disinfect other items in the same way. If you cannot wash the items, you can put them into a dryer set on “high” for at least 30 minutes. Clean clothes don’t have to be washed again. Just put them into the dryer for 30 minutes.

## 4. Make your bed an island.

- This works only if you bed has legs.
- Move your bed away from the wall and make sure nothing is touching the wall or the floor.
- Put each leg of you bed into a cup as seen on the reverse side.

**5. Inspect your bed frequently and destroy any bed bugs you find.** Periodically inspect the other furniture in the room in the same way.

**6. Use caulk to seal crevices and joints** in baseboards, in your bed frame and headboard and in other furniture.

**7. Remove as much clutter from your home as possible.** Clutter provides more places for bed bugs to hide. Any items that cannot be disposed of should be moved into sealable plastic containers.

- **DON’T PANIC!** Bed bugs are not known to transmit disease.
- **Don’t Try to Treat Your Home with Pesticides Yourself!** This can be dangerous and could make the problem worse by causing the bed bugs to scatter and spread into other rooms or apartments.
- **Alert Your Landlord.** Bed bugs are a problem that requires cooperation between landlords and tenants. Bed bugs are very hard to get rid of and almost always require the help of a professional pest control company.

## How to Make a Furniture Leg Bed Bug Trap

**NOTE:** These traps will work only if your bed, couch, or chair has legs. No part of the furniture (except the legs) can be touching the floor, walls or other furniture. Otherwise, bed bugs will find another way up onto the furniture.

1. Buy two sizes of plastic bowls. One bowl should easily fit inside the other. You will need two bowls for each furniture leg that you want to protect. The sizes of the bowls will depend on the size of the furniture legs. Each bowl must be at least 1 ½ inches high.
2. Lightly sprinkle talcum powder into the small bowl. Baby powder will work as long as it contains talc and *not* cornstarch. The powder prevents the bed bugs coming down off the bed from getting out of the small bowl. (Diatomaceous Earth also works in place of talcum powder. Follow safety instructions.)
3. Put masking tape or sports tape around the *outside* of the large bowl. This is to help the bed bugs crawl up into the large bowl. Bed bugs have a hard time climbing on slick surfaces and they cannot jump or fly.
4. Put soapy water (liquid hand soap or dishwashing detergent in water is fine) into the large bowl. This is to drown bed bugs that try to get to the furniture leg.
5. Put the small bowl inside the large bowl and put the furniture leg into the small bowl.
6. Check the bowls often and empty the bed bugs. You can flush them down the toilet.
7. Make sure that the furniture is at least three inches away from any wall or other pieces of furniture. Keep bed covers and sheets from touching the floor, any wall or other furniture.

**Even if you don't have bed bugs, the bowl traps can help you monitor for bed bugs. The earlier you know you have them, the easier it will be to get rid of them.**



Photo of the commercial ClimbUp® Interceptor