

## Stubborn housemates – bed bugs

Bed bugs in Zurich spread very quickly and once they are there, they are difficult to get rid of. Although most people have heard of them, nobody actually really wants to know anything about them.

After all, they themselves are clean and bed bugs are always a sign of a lack of hygiene, right? **Wrong! This commonly believed myth is completely inaccurate.**



### What are bed bugs?

For a long time bed bugs were virtually extinct in Europe; however, there have been more and more cases over the last 15 years, and in some cities they are spreading at an alarming rate. Once fully grown, these parasitic insects measure around 4.5 to 6.5 mm and are often found near places where people relax or lie down, such as in living rooms and bedrooms.

### How and where can you pick up bed bugs?

Unfortunately, everywhere you go there is a risk of picking up bed bugs. It has nothing to do with a lack of hygiene – this myth is completely inaccurate. Maybe you recently purchased a pretty new chest of drawers at your favourite second-hand store or you have been travelling – staying in a hostel in India, a business hotel in London or a luxury villa in the Maldives. Bed bugs can appear everywhere, **and each time you travel or purchase second-hand furniture there is a potential risk.**

### How can you protect yourself against them?

When you go travelling, **never place your luggage under the bed.** Ideally, keep it far away from the bed (such as in the entrance area) and never leave your suitcase lying around open. When purchasing second-hand furniture, we recommend that you **look for traces of excrement.** You can also do this in your hotel room: lift up the mattress and look around the edge of the bed frame for excrement. If you find any, demand a new room immediately.

Are you unsure whether you became infested with bed bugs when you last travelled? Immediately unpack your suitcase, ideally in the bath tub. Sort out your **laundry** and seal it in airtight **plastic bags** until you wash it. Wash your laundry at no less than 40° – ideally at **60°**. Then run an empty wash cycle at no less than 60°C – washing machines are the most frequent cause of the spread of bed bugs.

Delicate items that cannot be washed in a washing machine (alarm clocks, cuddly toys, etc.) must also be placed in an airtight plastic bag and left in the freezer for several days.



### How do you know if you are infested with bed bugs?

It is difficult to detect as **only around 60% of people infected** have an allergic reaction to the bites and thus **notice an infestation**. Also, an allergic reaction might not occur until after the first few weeks. There are usually several red marks in a row, and they are often on uncovered parts of the body: **arms, feet, legs, neck and head**. An initial sign is **small spots of blood on pyjamas or sheets**.

Sometimes the skin only reddens slightly, but on some people it can also cause bruising.

If you do not experience an allergic reaction but suspect an infestation, you should inspect your room. Bed bugs love **warmth and darkness**; they often hide during the day **in cracks, in zips on mattresses, in drawers, on the bed base or frame, in plug sockets, in dowel holes or on skirting boards** – pretty much anywhere they are not disturbed. You probably won't find any bed bugs, rather just their excrement. In order to see it, we recommend using a torch and magnifying glass – the excrement measures just 0.5 to 1 mm.



**Better to be safe than sorry if you suspect an infestation of bed bugs** – by detecting an infestation early on, this can save both you and Juwo a lot of effort and money.

### What should you do if you detect a case of bed bugs?

1. **Contact Juwo immediately** - as it is a lengthy process to get rid of bed bugs and the longer you leave it, the harder it is.
2. **Do not let anyone in the room** before the experts are on the site.
3. **Seal towels and bed linen airtight in plastic bags and leave them in the room.**
4. **Do not use the washing machine** or let it run at least with 60° (hot).
5. **On no account do not remove items from the room / from the apartment** – weather clothing (incl. **spare outfit** for overnight stays), **bags, backpacks, laptops** or furniture.