

Bed Bug Bite

Definition

- Bites from bed bugs

Health Information

Symptoms

- Usually cause itchy, red bumps in a group or line
- Often they look like a hive or mosquito bite
- Bite may have a red dot (puncture) in the center. This is where the bed bug bit through the skin.
- Occasionally, a small blister can occur in the center
- Bites are usually on exposed skin (arms, legs and face)
- Bites are usually first noted in the morning

Diagnosis

- Live bed bugs hide and are not usually seen. Close inspection of the mattress may find some.
- They are 1/4 inch (6 mm), flat, oval shaped, reddish-brown bugs.
- Suspect bed bugs if over 3 red bumps in a row are on exposed skin. The bumps or bites are very itchy.
- Bed bug waste (feces) are found on bedding or mattress seams. It looks like dark brown flecks or coffee grounds.
- A blood stain on the sheet may sometimes be found. This is from a bug smashed after feeding.

Cause

- Bed bugs are small visible blood-sucking bugs. They are about 1/4 inch (6 mm) in length.
- During the day, bed bugs hide in the corners of mattresses. They may also be found in bed crevices, floors, and walls.
- At night, the bed bugs come out of hiding. They feed on humans for about 5 minutes.

Prevention of Getting Bed Bugs

- Over half of bed bug infestations within homes start after recent travel.
- Avoid hotels and hostels where bed bugs have been reported. (see bedbugregistry.com)
- When you check into a hotel room, look for signs of bed bugs. Look for flecks of their waste (like coffee grounds) in the bedding and mattress. If present, ask for another room.
- Keep your luggage and clothing on a luggage rack off the floor.
- When you return from a trip, place all travel clothing into the clothes dryer. Run the dryer for 20 minutes. (Reason: The heat will kill any bed bugs or their eggs that are present). One pregnant bed bug can spread bed bugs to an entire house.

Care Advice

1. **Overview:**
 - Bed bug bites cause itchy red bumps.
 - They are usually less than ½ inch (12 mm) in size.
 - Some are larger (like a hive). These are normal reactions to a bed bug.
 - A large hive does not mean your child has an allergy.
 - The redness does not mean the bite is infected.
 - Bed bugs do not carry any infectious diseases.
 - Don't panic: You can get rid of bed bugs from your home.
 - Here is some care advice that should help.
2. **Steroid Cream for Itching:**
 - To reduce the itching, use 1% hydrocortisone cream (no prescription needed).
 - Apply 3 times a day until the itch is gone.
 - If you don't have, apply a baking soda paste until you can get some.
3. **Allergy Medicine For Itching:**
 - If itching becomes severe, give a dose of Benadryl.
 - No prescription is needed. Age limit: 1 year and older.
4. **Try Not to Scratch:**
 - Cut the fingernails short.
 - Help your child not to scratch.
 - Reason: Prevent a skin infection at the bite site.
5. **Bed Bug Repellents - Not Helpful:**
 - Insect repellents do not keep bed bugs from biting.
 - Repellents containing DEET (used on skin) and permethrin (used on clothing) do not help.
6. **Removing Bed Bugs from Your Home:**
 - Getting rid of bed bugs requires a licensed pest control service.
 - Look in the phone book or on the internet under Pest Control.
7. **What to Expect:**
 - Any pinkness or redness usually lasts 3 days.
 - The swelling may last 7 days.
 - The itch may last for 2 weeks.

Call Your Doctor If

- Bite looks infected (redness gets larger after 48 hours)
- Large red bumps last more than 7 days
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child becomes worse

Pediatric Care Advice

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