

## HOW TO PREVENT A BED BUG INFESTATION

**Baie-Comeau, July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020** – Even though bed bug infestations are very rare in our region, the Direction de santé publique de la Côte-Nord would like to inform the population about these bugs and what needs to be done in the presence of bed bugs.

The moving period which will get into full swing in the next few weeks is conducive to the transportation of bed bugs. An infestation does not necessarily result from insalubrity or from a poor maintenance of the housing. Both tenants and landlords may face this problem at some point in their life. Tenants are rarely accountable for the invasion of a place by bed bugs, but their bites can significantly affect their quality of life.

### Detecting bed bugs

Bed bugs are small, brown, oval, wingless insects looking like flattened apple seeds. At the beginning of an infestation, they are difficult to find, because they hide and they avoid light. They are often found in the seams of mattresses, bedsprings and bedroom furniture, but they can also hide in clothing, curtains, sofas or second-hand furniture, behind walls, peeled-off tapestry or frames, and in cracks in the walls and floors. They can also be found behind baseboards, in boxes, in books and in electrical appliances.

When the presence of bed bugs is confirmed somewhere, a thorough inspection of the whole building, from the basement to the attic, is necessary.

### Hints of their presence:

- Appearance of bites (similar to mosquito bites) and itching;
- More than one bite may be aligned or clustered in the same area on exposed body parts;
- Small blood stains on bed sheets or black spots on the seams of the mattress;
- Shed skin, excrements or eggshells in places where bed bugs hide.

Bed bugs walk, but they are often carried from one place to another when the object in which they hide is moved. Also, bed bugs can travel (e.g.: through air lines or sockets) from one room to another, or even from one housing to another.

### What to do in the presence of bed bugs?

- Do not solve the problem on your own. Insecticides sold in stores are not always appropriate, they can be dangerous to health and they may cause resistance to recognized efficient treatments.
- Anyone noticing the presence of bed bugs should talk about it as quickly as possible. Tenants must notify their landlord as soon as possible.
- As soon as they are informed of their presence, the landlord must contact a certified exterminator (who has training and a licence delivered by the ministère de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques). If the landlord refuses to take action, the tenant can contact the municipality (by mentioning the nuisance by-law) or the Régie du logement.

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### **Preventing the appearance of bed bugs**

You can prevent an infestation through the following actions:

- Look out for hints of their presence (bites on the skin, black spots);
- Be vigilant when you get second-hand clothes, mattresses or upholstered furniture;
- Inspect second-hand furniture and clean it thoroughly (very hot soapy water or household cleaner) before getting it in the house;
- Put second-hand clothes in a sealed plastic bag and directly put them in the washer to wash them with very hot water. Then, put them in the dryer at high temperature for at least 20 minutes;
- Do not gather objects found outside or in the trash;
- Often vacuum the house.

For more information, visit the website Québec.ca at the following address:

<https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/bed-bugs-bites/>

Source: Myriam Gagné  
Acting Assistant to the President and executive director and media relations officer  
Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux de la Côte-Nord  
418 589-9845, ext. 252281