

Say No: To Bedbugs!



Teresa Ward
December 2011

‘Tis the season for guests, make sure all of yours are invited!

It’s December, and for a lot of us, that means travel. We’re visiting family, or receiving visitors into our homes. Unfortunately, one of the downsides of all of this travel can be the spread of nasty little guys called bedbugs. Bedbugs hitch along on your luggage, shoes, and clothing and can spread from home to home, hotel to home, or even from car to home. All it takes is one little hitchhiker to make life difficult for months, so if you’re going to travel this holiday, or if you’re having guests stay with you, here are some tips to keep your home, and your guests, pest free!

It’s easier to keep them out than to get them out!

The perfect time to deal with bedbugs is before they’ve gotten into your home. So when you’re leaving the hotel, take your first steps to protect your family.

Check the outside of your luggage, clothing and shoes for the bugs and their eggs, and pack all clothing inside of a bed bug proof luggage liner or laundry bag before leaving the hotel. That way, anything you may have picked up while away from home (or at a host’s house) will be trapped inside.)

After inspecting your luggage carefully, take all clothing from the bedbug bag and wash and dry it in high heat. Over 140 degrees is needed to ensure that all bedbugs and their eggs are killed. Clothing and items that cannot be washed in high heat should be dry cleaned. You can also leave the items in temperatures below 32 degrees for several days to kill any insects or eggs. Remember, keeping the infestation from starting is a LOT easier than taking care of it once it’s in your house.

Keeping it invite only, ask away.

Yes, it’s awkward, but the best way to keep your home pest free is to keep the pests on the other side of the door. Before your guests come to stay, ask if they’ve ever had a run in with the little critters. Let them know you’ve read articles about it, and you’re concerned, it’s a good way to bring up the conversation and get an idea of their level of awareness.

Draw the line

Shoes are a major carrier of bedbugs. Ask your guests to remove their shoes and leave them outside the front door, or in the house on a hard surface.

When your guests are in the home, try to keep their luggage, clothing, laundry etc., together in the guest room. Once they leave, inspect all bedding, particularly mattress and box spring seams. If you *have* been exposed, and you can keep the infestation to one room, it’ll be easier to handle later.

A little vacation planning can make a big difference in your comfort level after the holidays. So keep your eye out, play it safe, and you’ll be able to sleep tight, without letting those bedbugs bite!

Want to use this article in your newsletter, blog or web site? You have my blessing so long as you include the following complete blurb with it (including links). Teresa Ward, President of Teresa's Family Cleaning and New York State's Small Business Entrepreneur of the Year is often considered Long Island's foremost authority on cleaning homes and businesses to create a cleaner and healthier environment for all. Our highly sought after, award winning weekly newsletter provides timely cleaning tips and other important Long Island information and charitable events for homeowners, businesses and not-for-profits. Visit us at <http://www.TerasasFamilyCleaning.com> to sign up and receive your copy today!