

Bed Bug PSA

Good afternoon all, this is a PSA for your future financial and mental health. With the whole hotel situation, many/most of you were exposed to bed bugs. We moved hotels and we moved quickly, but these little guys are extremely resilient so here are some precautionary measures that I would highly encourage you to take.

BARE minimum: when you get home, quarantine your bag and all of your session stuff—outside in a garage if possible, in contractor bags if not— and change into clean clothes outside.

Holes in the bag mean that the bag is compromised. This is one of the few situations in which excessive plastic bags are encouraged.

Do not allow any of your clothes, bags, or other items to rest on the floor, couch, or bed. When you do wash your clothes, dry them on high heat (125+ degrees) for at least 90 minutes to kill any hitchhikers and eggs. If you are concerned about your clothes shrinking or being damaged, placing them in the dryer first (for 90 minutes minimum) and then washing regularly may be an alternative.

There are photos online of what these creatures and their eggs look like. Many of the photos are infestation level, so keep an eye out for more subtle clues. Bed bug bites may not be visible on skin, as many people do not have a reaction at all. However, you may notice brown/gray smears on your sheets that indicate bed bug activity.

BETTER prevention: do all of the above and also look into these products:

[Diatomaceous earth](#) (food grade) is eco-friendly and effective (rare combo). It is made of the crushed fossilized remains of prehistoric organisms known as diatoms. Essentially, it's silica, so be careful when applying it so you do not breathe too much in. Once it's settled, however, it is perfectly safe for people, plants, and pets. Some people eat it, feed it to their animals, or use it for their gardens, so it's multi-use and worth the inexpensive purchase. A hand duster can also be purchased fairly inexpensively for application purposes.

The best thing about DE is that the bugs cannot develop an immunity to it. If anything with an exoskeleton comes into contact with it, the bug will become dehydrated and die. It cannot do anything to fight it. If the bug bumps into its bug buddies, they will also become dehydrated. There are videos on YouTube for the morbidly curious. Apply the dust lightly so the bugs do not try to find a way around it.

[Crossfire](#) is one of the few insecticides that actually works. Usually what is being sold online is a concentrate, so you may need to invest into a sprayer. It seems like overkill but the effect that these bugs can have on your mental health is worth the extra few bucks. Plus, you will feel like a cool exterminator as you spray your house and car (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED as you and your luggage have all been moving back and forth between hotel and car). This insecticide is effective because it works as a non-repellent and targets the eggs. It kills within 5 minutes of exposure and has a residual effect of up to 30 days.

For items that you are concerned about that cannot be placed into the dryer or treated with crossfire or DE, there is an alternative.

These items can be placed into a plastic bag with a [Nuvan](#) strip to kill any potential hitchhikers. These bags must be sealed. With the intruders trapped, it's a waiting game for them to succumb to the poison.

Items can also be placed in the freezer for at least 3 days, but it is still encouraged to inspect these items in detail once they are removed.

As I said, Crossfire and Nuvan are two of the few insecticides that are actually effective. Do not waste your money on insecticides that do not work; all this does is create superbugs. This is one of the reasons that bed bugs are so resilient. People have been trying to kill them with insecticides that are 50% effective if applied directly onto a live bug/egg, which is about the same odds as simply spraying with water. For comparison, DE is 90% effective over ten days and you do not have to dust each individual bug. If you have questions about the life span of bed bugs, identification, or treatment, see Macy Baca or google/YouTube.

Bed bugs have been making a global resurgence since the 1990s. Some attribute it to the creation of these superbugs, others to climate change, and others still to increased travel, both domestically and internationally. More than likely, the resurgence is due to all three. The presence of bed bugs does not necessarily indicate lack of hygiene. These guys do not discriminate (yay) and they will gladly make a home at the Plaza just as happily as they will set up shop in a Motel 6. It is more difficult for them to establish a colony when people and hotels take precautionary measures like these, keeping an eye out for any signs of intruders.

Finally, I would like to end this PSA by thanking our executive branch for working so hard to move us quickly to a second hotel. As I said, these non-discriminatory pests will do their best to make a home in any type of hotel, and it is likely that you would have been exposed at any other hotel in the area. Don't let this little misadventure sour your Fall 2023 session; instead, reflect on your positive mock government experiences as you

place your clothes in the dryer on high heat and keep a weather eye out for these unwelcome guests.