

The Common Bedbug



Bedbugs have adapted for living in our homes and other structures, and have some nice survival techniques that ensure it survives. One of these is the ability to go for very long periods of time without feeding, which can happen if it suddenly finds itself in a structure where people or pets no longer are present. They can survive for at least 6 months without feeding, so starving bedbugs out of homes is not a good option. Typically a bedbug feeds only once between each of its 5 molts, or in each instar stage. When the first nymph hatches from its egg it is a clear or whitish color, and as the exoskeleton hardens and it takes its first blood meal its color turns to the dark brownish-red we are used to, and will not revert again. The color now is the pigmentation of its exoskeleton, so digesting the blood and getting hungry again will not cause that color to change back to white.



The insect feeds for anywhere from 3 to 10 minutes, depending on its life stage, with older bugs feeding longer. It must have the blood meal in order to progress to the next nymph stage and to the adult, so with 5 molts it feeds 5 times leading to the adult stage. After this the bug may feed multiple times, perhaps every week or so, after 5 to 7 days it probably has completed digesting the previous meal and needs a new one if available. If none is available it goes into that semi-dormant stage until there are signals of a new blood host back again, which is carbon dioxide and heat.