



## Don't let pesticides make your bed bug problem worse!

Lately, Joyce and her family had been waking up with itchy bug bites on their bodies. Joyce called a pest control company to inspect their home and the pest management professional confirmed that they had bed bugs. She was told that it would likely take two or more visits to get it under control.

Joyce thought there had to be a faster and cheaper solution. She incorrectly reasoned that since bed bugs are insects, she and her family could use insect repellent on their skin at night to keep the bed bugs from biting them while asleep. She also read on the internet that people were recommending strong outdoor-use-only products or other household chemicals to get rid of their bedbugs fast and cheap. Joyce went to the store and started examining different insect repellents and garden products, and realized none of them mentioned bed bugs on their labels. She decided to call the National Pesticide Information Center (NPIC) to get more information before buying anything.

[Click here](#) to find out what Joyce learned when she called NPIC...



Call toll-free **1.800.858.7378**

8:00 am to 12:00 pm Pacific Time (PT), Monday - Friday

Visit us anytime on the web at [npic.orst.edu](http://npic.orst.edu)



## Take Home Message

### Don't let pesticides make your bed bug problem worse!

The Pesticide Specialist explained that using pesticide products not intended for bed bugs can be risky to her family's health, and may actually make the bed bug problem worse. Therefore, it is very important to [always read and follow the label directions](#).

Insect repellents are intended for the specific pests listed on the product label, and have [not been shown](#) to repel bed bugs. Currently there are no insect repellents registered for use against bed bugs that can be applied to human skin.

The Pesticide Specialist also explained that using outdoor products indoors is not only against the law, it may cause the bed bugs to spread out from one or two hiding places to several. These products may also be too strong for indoor use, increasing a person's [risk](#) of pesticide exposure and adverse effects. Joyce learned that using outdoor pesticides indoors can result in lengthy and costly cleanup for homeowners.

The Pesticide Specialist explained that while bed bugs are a difficult pest to live with and control, they are not impossible to eliminate. Joyce learned that an [integrated pest management \(IPM\)](#) approach is essential for controlling bed bugs. [IPM strategies](#) include regular and thorough inspections of bed bug hiding places, reducing clutter and regular vacuuming, mattress and box-spring encasements, and using extreme temperatures. For example, high heat dryers can be used for clothing, and smaller items can be frozen to eliminate hiding bugs.

Pesticides may also be part of an IPM approach for bed bugs when other strategies don't work. Joyce learned that she should always read the product label first to be sure it is [approved for bed bugs](#), and use the product according to label directions. The Pesticide Specialist explained that some bed bug populations have developed resistance to common insecticides, so certain sprays may be ineffective, no matter how much is used. Over-use or daily pesticide applications should be avoided to prevent the bed bugs from spreading out or developing resistance.

Finally, the Pesticide Specialist directed Joyce to the NPIC "[Understanding and Controlling Bed Bugs](#)" website for more bed bug information and resources.

