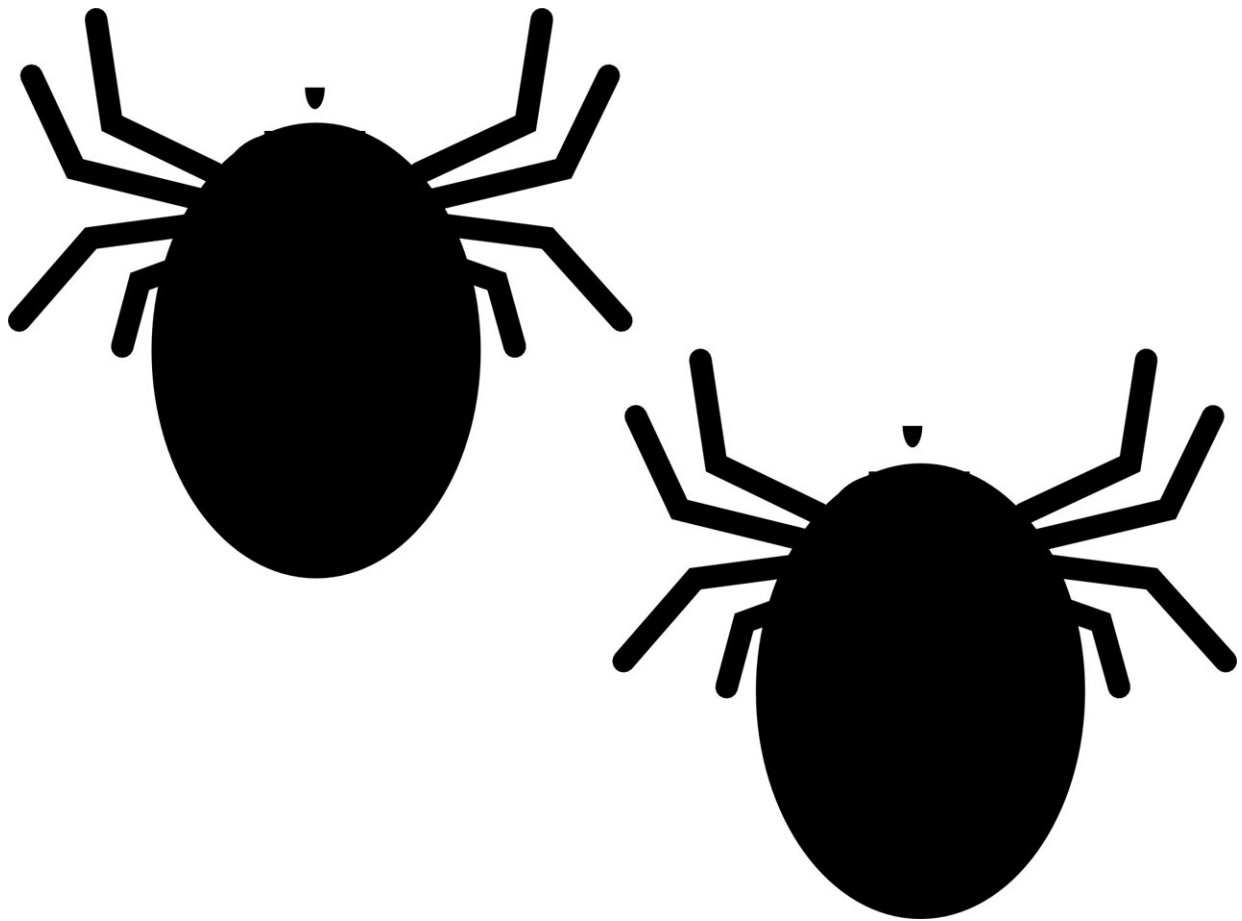


# France to hold crisis meetings on bedbug 'scourge'

October 3 2023

---



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

The French government said Tuesday it would host emergency meetings this week to examine surging numbers of reported bedbug cases, which

are being increasingly seen as a major potential public health problem.

Bedbugs have in recent weeks gone from being a subject of potential derision to a contentious political issue in France, with aghast citizens reporting seeing the creatures in locations including trains, the Paris metro and cinemas.

The concerns have gained added weight with France in the throes of hosting the Rugby World Cup and Paris preparing to welcome athletes and fans from around the world for the 2024 Olympics.

Two schools—one in Marseille and the other in Villefranche-sur-Saone outside Lyon in southeastern France—have become infected with bedbugs and have been closed down for several days to be cleaned out, [local authorities](#) said.

The aim of a meeting on Wednesday, which will see Transport Minister Clement Beaune host transport and passenger organizations, will be to "quantify the situation and strengthen the measures", his ministry said.

"We want to inform on the actions undertaken and act in the service of travelers to reassure and protect," the ministry said.

An inter-ministerial meeting will then take place on Friday, government spokesman Olivier Veran told RTL TV, promising to "rapidly bring answers for the French".

Meanwhile, the head of President Emmanuel Macron's Renaissance party in the French National Assembly, Sylvain Maillard, said a cross-party bill would be put forward "at the beginning of December" to combat the "scourge" of bedbugs.

He said the president's party and its allies had decided to make the

subject a "priority" and urged the right-wing and hard-left opposition to come up with suggestions for a cross-party text.

Health Minister Aurelien Rousseau insisted on France Inter radio there was no "general panic" over the issue.

"What concerns me is that people do not get cheated by firms that make them pay 2,000 or 3,000 euros (\$2,100 or \$3,100)" to rid their houses of bedbugs, he added, denouncing "abuses" in the pest control sector.

## 'Question of public health'

Bedbugs, which had largely disappeared from [daily life](#) by the 1950s, have made a resurgence in recent decades, mostly due to high population densities and more mass transit.

One-tenth of all French households are believed to have had a [bedbug](#) problem over the past few years, usually requiring a pest control operation costing several hundreds of euros that often needs to be repeated.

The blood-sucking insects have been spotted in the Paris metro, high-speed trains and at Paris's Charles De Gaulle Airport.

But the individual cases have not been confirmed by the authorities and RMC TV reported that a probe by Paris transport operator RATP had found no bedbugs on its services.

Renaissance MP Bruno Studer said that a priority for the future would be counting the number of bedbugs.

"We do not know today if there are more bedbugs than in 2019," he said.

In addition to the development of statistical tools, the text could make it possible to recognize the problem as "a question of public health," said his colleague Robin Reda.

"We have wasted six years. The government has done nothing," said the head of the group of hard-left France Unbowed MPs Mathilde Panot, adding the "urgency is to act now" with a national prevention plan, an emergency fund and the creation of public disinfestation services.

Bedbugs get their name from their habit of nesting in mattresses, although they can also hide in clothes and in luggage.

They come out at night to feed on human blood.

Bedbug bites leave red areas, blisters or large rashes on the skin, and can cause intense itching or allergic reactions.

They also often cause [psychological distress](#), sleeping issues, anxiety and depression.

© 2023 AFP

Citation: France to hold crisis meetings on bedbug 'scourge' (2023, October 3) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-10-france-crisis-bedbug-scourge.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.