

As you may have seen on the news, bedbug infestations in the U.S. are escalating at an alarming rate after a nearly 50-year absence. Bedbugs are not known to transmit disease; however, they are a pest with public health importance.



Bedbugs are small, flat, wingless, reddish-brown insects that range from 1 to 7 millimeters in length. They can live several months without a blood meal.

Bedbugs are nesting parasites, and infestations usually occur around or near the areas where people sleep or spend a significant period of time, including:

- Homes and apartments
- Rooming houses
- Residence hall rooms
- Hotels and motels
- Nursing homes
- Hospitals
- Cruise ships, buses, taxis and trains

They hide during the day in places like the seams of mattresses, box springs, bed frames, headboards, dressers, cracks or crevices, behind wallpaper or posters, and under any clutter or objects around a bed. They fit in the smallest places and can remain there for long periods of time.



## INFESTATION DETECTION

Infestations are usually detected by welts and skin irritation caused by bites and by the fecal smears and blood spots visible on pillowcases, sheets and mattresses. Heavy infestations of bedbugs are also accompanied by a distinct odor. Bedbugs are not normally implicated in the transmission of diseases. Their medical significance is usually limited to itching and inflammation from their bites.

Early bedbug detection is critical to the prevention and management of these parasites. The first step in dealing with bedbugs is to locate their hiding places. When inspecting for bedbugs, look for the insects themselves as well as the telltale fecal and blood spots that indicate a nearby hiding place.

Everyone is at risk for bedbug bites when visiting an infested area. However, people who travel frequently or share living and sleeping quarters where other people have previously slept have an increased risk for being bitten and for spreading bedbug infestation.

## PREVENTING INFESTATIONS

Ridding an infested area of bedbugs can be difficult, so it makes sense to take precautions to avoid them in the first place. You should be vigilant when acquiring used furnishings, especially beds and couches. Avoid curbside items and closely examine secondhand articles (garage sale items) before you bring them into your room.

Preventive inspection is the best way to uncover infestations in the initial stages when they are easiest to control. Just follow a few inspection guidelines:

- Furniture, particularly bedroom furniture, must be inspected carefully.
- Check under and behind other pieces of furniture, such as chairs, couches, dressers, etc.
- Remove drawers from dressers, inspect them carefully and examine the interior of the dresser.
- Remove and inspect objects, such as pictures, mirrors and curtains, that are hung or mounted on walls.
- Check clothing and other items stored in areas where bedbugs may hide.



Bedbugs are usually transported from place to place as people travel.

They hitch rides in the seams and folds of luggage, overnight bags, folded clothes, bedding, furniture, and anywhere else they can hide.

If you have traveled in the last few months, inspect your luggage as well as closets and storage areas. Typical hiding places include:

- Tufts, buttons, folds and seams of mattresses
- Cracks in the box spring and bed frame
- Behind baseboards
- Window and door casings
- Behind pictures
- Electrical switch plates
- Loose wallpaper
- In the pleats of drapes
- The upholstery of furniture
- Under carpets
- In stuffed chairs

## TRAVEL TIPS

People who travel regularly are especially susceptible to acquiring bedbugs in their clothing or on luggage and then unsuspectingly bringing the bugs back home. Tips for travelers include:

- Check mattresses, headboards and carpet in hotel rooms. If bugs are found, request a room in another section of the hotel or move to a different hotel.
- Keep all luggage and belongings off the floor.
- Securely bag dirty clothes and then wash as soon as possible when arriving home. Wash in the hottest water and dry at the hottest temperature that the fabric allows.
- Check luggage for bugs before loading into the car or into the home.
- Check the bottom of any luggage that has been in the trunk of a taxi or other public transportation.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT BEDBUGS IN YOUR ROOM

Call the Physical Plant at ext. 2460 to report a possible infestation. An employee or professional exterminator will be sent to your room to inspect the area and determine if there is a possible infestation. If bedbugs are found, you will be instructed on proper steps in laundering your bedding and clothing and actions that will be taken by the exterminator to eradicate the pests. Bedbugs are susceptible to heat, so you should wash clothes in the hottest water (120 degrees) and dry at the highest temperature that the fabric allows without damage.

If you have bites or welts that are suspected to be from bedbugs, you are encouraged to visit the Health Center. There is no absolute confirmation that bites are from bedbugs or other types of insects such as fleas, but the health care provider may be able to determine that you don't have poison ivy or some other medical type of rash.

For more information on bedbugs, visit [www.cdc.org](http://www.cdc.org), [ohioline.osu.edu](http://ohioline.osu.edu) (search for "bedbugs") or [www.centralohiobedbugs.org](http://www.centralohiobedbugs.org)



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BUT NOT AT ONU!



“Good night, sleep tight, and don't let the bed bugs bite” is an old saying that is beginning to take on renewed significance.