

# *Bed Bugs 101*

You might ask why bed bugs are back in our lives? Their presence on college campuses and in hotels across the country is growing due to decreased use of pesticides and increased world travel. The good news is that, although they're annoying pests, they don't cause disease. And although they're tough to get rid of, they can be eliminated.

Residential Living & Learning is committed to providing a safe living environment for all students. We continue to monitor any and all bed bug reports and follow through with treatment when necessary. It is important that students and administrators, along with our Facilities team, work together to bring effective treatment if/when our halls and apartments are affected.

Remember that the key to prevention is in knowing where to look for bed bugs — and what to look for.

**What are bed bugs?**

**Can they harm us?**

**Where do they hide?**

**What should I do if I suspect bed bugs or if I'm bitten?**

**What shouldn't I do if I find them?**

**What is the process for treating bed bugs?**

**How can I help prevent bed bugs?**

**Where can I learn more?**

**What are bed bugs?**

- Bed bugs are typically the size of an apple seed (adult) or a poppy seed (nymph), are flat, oval shaped, and have six legs. Adult bedbugs are visible to the naked eye.
- Adults range from brown to red. Nymphs are lighter in color. Eggs are white and about 1/32 inches long.
- Adults and nymphs feed on blood, mostly at night.
- Bed bugs run fast, but do not jump, fly, or burrow.
- Bed bugs “hitchhike” on suitcases, bags, and clothing.

**Can they harm us?**

- They do not spread disease and are not life threatening.
- Although up to 70 percent of people do not react to bed bug bites, the bites can produce marks, rashes, or welts.

## Where do they hide?

- Routinely check your mattress thoroughly, as well as under and around your bed. Look at the mattress seams and piping, under the mattress, and around the bed frame for any sign of bed bugs.
- Look inside drawers and check all items on your nightstand and on your wall.
- Check for bed bug droppings, blood stains, and eggs on sheets and blankets. Bed bugs stay near their source of food, and are typically not found in other parts of the room/apartment, although they can be. They are attracted to CO2 and body warmth.

## What should I do if I suspect bed bugs or if I'm bitten?

- Contact your RL
  - If your RL is not available, contact your Hall Office, asking for the RL on duty.
  - Tell the RL your room number and a phone number where you can be reached.
- Put in a work order using the Maintenance Request on the Housing home page. Report any bed bug sightings or bites without delay.
  - Report whether you have seen bed bugs or suspect that you've been bitten by them — or both.
  - Report where you were when you first noticed you had been bitten (room, library, academic building).
- If you have been bitten and develop a reaction to the bite, go to [Student Health Services](#) to alleviate bite site discomfort and receive treatment advice.

## What shouldn't I do if I find them?

- Don't panic.
- Don't treat the bugs with your own pesticides. This could make professional treatments less effective and prolong elimination.
- Don't move your belongings-or yourself-to another room without first checking with your Residential Coordinator. You could potentially spread the bugs to other places.

## What is the process for treating bed bugs?

- Do not move your clothing, bedding, book bag or any items in your room or suite, as it will be necessary for the exterminator to assess where the bugs are living. However, do clear enough area for the exterminator to have easy access to all sections of your room.
- Residential Living & Learning will provide a mattress encasement, if applicable, which will seal off the mattress until treatment occurs.
- If the exterminator finds bed bugs, he will treat your room with special chemicals designed to effectively kill the bugs while ensuring your health and safety. Often, more than one treatment is necessary.

- Heat treatment may be required in addition to the chemical treatment; the Residential Living & Learning Facilities Coordinator will determine if this step is necessary and will explain what is involved.
- Please note that treatment will occur, but not always immediately. It can take from 24-72 hours to arrange for a full treatment; longer if heat treatment is needed.

### **How can I help prevent bed bugs?**

- Keep your room tidy. While bed bugs are not attracted to dirty surroundings, they do find more places to hide among clutter.
- Check regularly around your bed and room for any signs of bed bugs.
- Wash your clothing and bed linen regularly, and place in the dryer for at least 30 minutes on high heat to kill any eggs, nymphs, or adults.
- Limit use of secondhand items, always inspecting them carefully, and washing and cleaning donated items before using.
- Vacuum carpet and floors thoroughly, as well as baseboards, and dispose of vacuum bags promptly (if you have bed bugs, they will live inside bags). Wash floors regularly.
- When you travel, check rooms for any signs of bed bugs. Do not place your suitcase or belongings on or under the bed, or on the floor; use a luggage rack whenever possible. Carefully inspect all belongings before returning to campus.

### **Where can I learn more?**

To learn more about bed bugs, go to the following helpful links:

- [Bed Bug Central](#)
- [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)