



# McHenry County Department of Health MCDH

## Bed Bug Identification

Bed bugs are small, flat, reddish-brown in color, wingless, range from 1mm to 7mm's in size, and can live several months without feeding. Bed bugs are parasitic insects that feed on the blood of humans and other animals while they sleep. While bed bugs are not known to spread disease, their bites can cause itching as well as great anxiety and sleeplessness for those dealing with an infestation.



Bed bug infestations occur in and around areas where people sleep. They can be found in both clean and dirty living conditions. They are expert hiders and hide during the day most commonly in places such as seams of mattresses, box springs, bed frames, and headboards. Other places they may hide include dresser tables, inside cracks or crevices, behind wallpaper, on baseboards, or in any other clutter or objects around a bed.

### SIGNS OF AN INFESTATION

- Live or dead bed bugs
- Bed bug eggs (adhering to crevices)
- Shed exoskeletons (amber colored shells)
- Excrement (reddish brown specks and smears)
- Musty sweet odor (in heavily infested areas)



Bed bugs and excrement on mattress

Home health workers may be at risk for coming into contact with bed bugs. It is important to know how to identify bed bugs and protect yourself from bringing them with you when you leave. Here are some ways you can protect yourself when entering other people's homes.

- Inform the client that you are taking precautions for their safety
- Take only the items necessary for the appointment
- Whenever possible, transport your supplies in a sealed container
- Place your items in a plastic bag before you enter the home
- Do not sit on or place your items on upholstered furniture
- Put a barrier towel down to place your items on inside the home. Dispose of the towels in the person's home or place them in a plastic bag
- Inspect yourself and your belongings for evidence of bed bugs after leaving
- Dispose of all plastic bags before entering your home
- Wash your clothes in hot water and dry on high heat for 20 to 30 minutes. This will kill any bed bugs or eggs that may be present

If you find bed bugs, tell the client! Refer them to a pest control company or help them contact their landlord or building manager



Travelers may be at risk for encountering or spreading bed bug infestations. The more often you travel, the greater your risk. Bed bugs can be found in both clean and dirty living areas and have been found in luxury hotels and on cruise ships. Following are precautions you can take while traveling.

- Check the bed bug registry for bed bug reports
- Talk to a hotel manager about your bed bug concerns
- Inspect the room for signs of a bed bug infestation
- Leave all luggage and other belongings in the car until you finish your inspection
- Check the sheets, mattresses, pillows, bedding, headboard, and upholstered furniture for evidence of bed bugs
- Bring your items into the hotel room in a plastic bag and keep them in the bag during your stay. When you check out of the room, leave the plastic bags behind
- Keep your luggage on luggage racks or in the bath tub
- After a trip seal your luggage in a plastic bag for two weeks to kill any bed bugs or eggs that may have hitched a ride home with you

If you find evidence of bed bugs, report it to a manager immediately and request to be moved to a new room!



## If you think you may have bed bugs in your home...

- Call a pest control company with bed bug experience
- Integrated pest management (IPM) uses a combination of methods and is most effective and least hazardous in dealing with bed bug infestations and may include:

- Encasements for your pillows, mattresses, and box springs
- Vacuuming (this may actually spread infestations)
- Steam or heat
- Cold
- Pesticides
- Traps

Bed bugs are hard to get rid of on your own. IPM can be expensive but effective



- It is also important to know what not to do if you suspect an infestation. These steps can help prevent the spread of an infestation and keep your family healthy

Don't send clothes to the dry cleaner, thrift stores, friends or garage sales

Don't throw away box spring or mattress

Don't ignore the infestation (established infestations are harder to get rid of)

Don't spray bedding or furniture; read all labels!

Acting fast and smart about bed bugs can help get rid and prevent infestations from getting more established and from spreading to different areas in your home.

## What Schools Need to Know

As more homes become infested with bed bugs, schools are more at risk of becoming infested or a hub for bed bugs to spread from one home to another. Therefore schools need to take a proactive action approach to prevent bed bugs from spreading.

### How can schools be proactive against bed bugs?

- Schools should have a integrated pest management (IPM) plan in place in case there is an incidence of bed bugs.
- Inspect items that travel from home to school, such as back packs, daily for bed bugs.
- If there is an infestation in a student's home, contact the parent to see what type of treatment is being done. Take precautions such as storing the student's belongings in plastic bags and doing daily inspections of belongings until the student's home is successfully treated.
- If bed bugs are found in a classroom repeatedly, have a pest management professional inspect the room and treat it if necessary.

### Could my classroom be infested??

- Bed bugs in schools are uncommon however they may hitchhike to school from an infested home by hiding in a student's clothes or backpack.



# Bed Bugs: School Response Flow Chart

