

Dealing with Bed Bugs . How we can work together to reduce the spread.



Adult bed bugs are small, reddish brown, wingless and have very flat bodies.

At left—highly magnified view.

At right—actual size
(3/8"-1/4")



Bed bugs are continuing to spread through single-family & multi-unit homes. Therefore, this means that more people are living with bed bugs than ever before. This increases the possibility of people transporting bed bugs to other locations. Virtually any place where people travel or visit could potentially have bed bugs. Schools are no exception because of the number of people in the building.

About Bed Bugs

Bed bugs are straw-colored to reddish-brown and do not have wings. They are usually very flat, except after they have just fed, when they are filled with blood. Adult bed bugs are 3/8 to 1/4-inches long. Young bed bugs look like adults, but are smaller and lighter in color.

Bed bugs do not fly or jump, but can move rapidly on floors, walls, ceilings and other surfaces. Female bed bugs lay their eggs (clusters of 10-50) in secluded areas and are tiny, white, and hard to see on most surfaces. The bug will reach maturity in a little over a month and live ten months to a year. As they grow, they feed on human blood but will also bite other warm-blooded animals including dogs and cats.

Bed bugs are most active at night and prefer to stay hidden and come out when people sleep. Bed bugs do not have nests like ants and bees, but tend to congregate in hiding areas close to humans. Transmission of diseases from the bites is considered unlikely. Some people do experience itching and inflammation following a feeding. Remember: A single bug is not an infestation.

Where do they come from?

Here are some ways bed bug problems get started:

- You can bring them home in your luggage from hotels.
- You buy or bring home used furniture with bed bugs already living in the cracks or crevices.
- Overnight guests or friends may bring bed bugs with them when they visit your home.
- If you live in an apartment, you can get them from neighbors. Bed bugs can move from room to room, apartment to apartment.
- If you move into a home or an apartment with bed bugs, you'll have an instant problem. Bed bugs can live months without food so they can live in empty hotel rooms or apartments until people move in.
- By clinging to your clothing and moved to new location.



(Bed bug spots near cracks of futon frame.)



(Typical bed bug spots and smears on a mattress.)

Where do they hide?

Bed bugs live in gaps, cracks and other openings around the bed. They leave dark spots or smears on the sheets, mattresses or near their hiding places.

Almost all bed bugs live in the bed or within 15-feet of the bed. If people have been sleeping on sofas, bed bugs can be found there too. A few bed bugs may be found farther away from the bed. Bed bugs can crawl 20 feet in a night looking for a blood meal and then go back to their hiding places.

Is it a Bed Bug?

Some other bugs that look like bed bugs feed on bats and birds. It's important to make sure you have bed bugs. Ask a pest control professional or contact the extension office for help identifying your pest.

Check the Bed

- Take off all the sheets and blankets. Look for dark spots, smears and bed bugs.
- Look at the mattress and turn it over. Do you see any dark spots, smears and bed bugs?
- Move the mattress off the bed and turn the box springs over so you can look at it. Tear away the dust cover. Carefully look at the wood frame for cracks and gaps. Peel back the fabric where it's stapled to the wood frame, and look for bed bugs spots near the staples.



(Bed bugs under fabric stapled to the framing of box springs.)

Check the Room

- Near sleeping areas, look behind pictures frames, in telephones or radios, even inside books.
- Remove the drawers from bedside tables and dressers. Look for dark spots, smears, and bed bugs.
- Check behind the head of the bed and look for bed bugs where the carpet meets the wall.
- Carefully take off the covers around electrical outlets. Look for bed bugs in the outlet box.
- Don't forget the closet. Bed bugs will hang on clothing in closets.
- If people sleep on a sofa or other type of upholstered furniture, it also needs to be checked for bed bugs.
- When traveling, inspect room as you first enter. The most likely hiding place is behind the headboard, but like above, there are many locations for them to hide. Hotel/Motel headboards can be lifted off the hanger to fully inspect behind it. Never place your luggage on the floor.

What you can do at home

First, get positive identification on the bug. The local extension office can assist in confirming presence of bed bugs. They are located at 384 Halls Lane in Shepherdsville and can be reached at 502-543-2257. When taking a bug to the extension office for identification:

- Try to keep the bug intact;
- Place the bug on tape to secure in place;
- Seal bug inside plastic sandwich bag

If a room has bed bugs, really clean it and get rid of any clutter like piles of toys, magazines or clothes. Cluttered areas give bed bugs more places to hide.

Wash and then dry your bedding in a hot dryer. This will kill the bed bugs.

Place clothing, shoes, backpacks, and etc, in dryer on medium to high heat for 20 minutes. Place the items in sealed container or plastic bag immediately after removing from the dryer. Vacuum the mattress, box springs, furniture, beds, headboards, and sofas. Make sure you turn the box springs over and vacuum carefully. Vacuum the area where the carpet meets the wall, especially near the head of the bed. When you are finished, take the vacuum cleaner bag immediately to a dumpster or to an outside trash container. Eliminate their shelter by sealing cracks and crevices.

If the mattress and box spring are in bad shape, throw them away. If the mattress is in good shape, it can be covered with a special zippered case made of tightly woven fabric. These cases are made for all sizes of mattresses. If you use a case on your mattress, keep it on at least a year to make sure all the bed bugs are dead. The box springs (or foundation) has even more hiding places than the mattress so it will also need a case.

While there are many over the counter remedies that claim to eliminate bed bugs, most of them have little to no residual of chemicals, therefore it requires direct spraying onto the bugs to kill them. Additionally, seldom are eggs affected at all by these products. A thorough inspection and removal from a professional pest control company is most effective way to rid the bugs.

What BCPS can do

While feeding patterns and activity cycles of bed bugs do not lend schools to be a "preferred" environment, we do expect sightings of "hitchhikers" reflecting the increase in the community. To minimize the school being a transfer point (i.e. moving bed bugs from one place to another) we feel it is more effective and safer to focus on preventing this transfer through education, building maintenance, people management. With a sighting of a bed bug, a confirmation will be determined by trained staff member or the extension office, then contact with parent/guardian will be made to discuss our policy. We reserve the right to inspect your child's clothing, including shoes, jackets, backpacks and other potential transmissions sources. A daily change of clothing upon arrival may also be required as well as placing the above items in a dryer (if available to kill the bugs and eggs).

A sighting of a bed bug in the school is not an infestation. Use of that term should be reserved for situations when bed bugs have settled in and are reproducing as a result of consistent and available night time food supply. For that reason, monitoring, not pesticide application will be our first response to reports of hitchhikers.

For additional resources, go to
<https://www2.ca.uky.edu/entomology/entfacts/ef636.asp>