

BED BUGS

The presence of bed bugs is spreading rapidly within the United States. A bed bug infestation can have a negative impact on persons living in the home. Reach Dane encourages its staff to review the following information regarding bed bugs to better educate families on bed bugs and assist families in eliminating bed bug infestations.



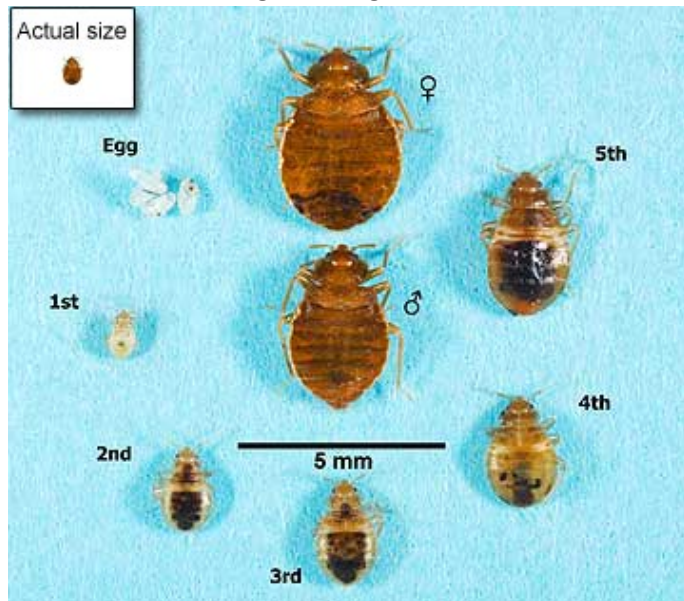
Bed bug infestations usually occur around or near the areas where people sleep. Bed bugs hide during the day. Infestations are not always apparent. Reach Dane staff who visit families in their homes should review the following recommendations in order to and minimize the potential for transporting bed bugs to other residences, the workplace, and personal homes. Following these suggestions will protect not only you, but the families you visit. ***Unless there is a severe infestation, the risk of picking up bed bugs during a home visit is relatively low.***

BED BUG INFORMATION:

What are bed bugs?

Bed bugs (*Cimex lectularius*) are small, flat, parasitic insects that feed solely on the blood of people and animals while they sleep. Bed bugs are reddish-brown in color, wingless, range from 1mm to 7mm (roughly the size of Lincoln's head on a penny), and can live several months without a blood meal.

Bed bug infestations usually occur around or near the areas where people sleep. These areas include apartments, shelters, rooming houses, hotels, cruise ships, buses, trains, and dorm rooms. Bed bugs are nocturnal. They hide during the day in places such as seams of mattresses, box springs, bed frames, headboards, dresser tables, inside cracks or crevices, behind wallpaper, or any other clutter or objects around a bed or other sleeping area. Bed bugs have been shown to be able to travel over 100 feet in a night but tend to live within 8 feet of where people sleep. Their presence is not determined by the cleanliness of the living conditions where they are found.



Bed bugs should not be considered as a medical or public health hazard. Bed bugs are not known to spread disease. Bed bugs can be an annoyance because their presence may cause itching and loss of sleep. Sometimes the itching can lead to excessive scratching that can sometimes increase the chance of a secondary skin infection.

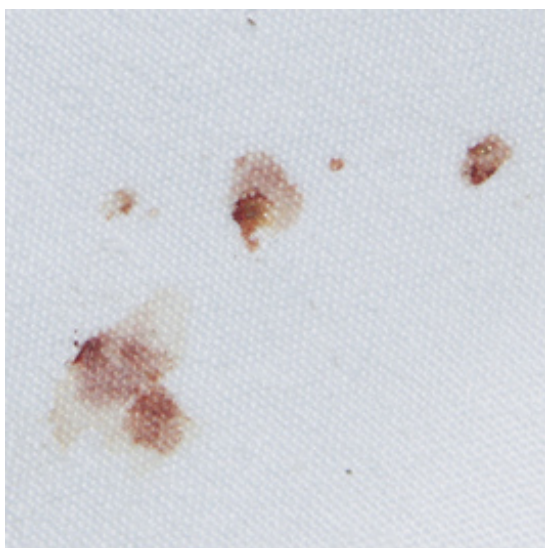
What are the signs and symptoms of a bed bugs infestation?

One of the easiest ways to identify a bed bug infestation is by the tell-tale bite marks on the face, neck, arms, hands, or any other body. However, these bite marks may take as long as 14 days to develop in some people so it is important to look for other clues when determining if bed bugs have infested an area. These signs include:

- the bed bugs' exoskeletons after molting
- bed bugs in the fold of mattresses and sheets
- rusty-colored blood spots due to their blood-filled feces that they excrete on the mattress or nearby furniture
- a sweet musty odor



Box spring covering and mattress with adult bed bugs, skin castings, feces, and eggs



Close up of blood spots from feces on pillow

How do I know if someone in my home has been bitten by a bed bug?

It can be hard to tell if a person has been bitten by a bed bug. When bed bugs bite, they inject an anesthetic and an anticoagulant that prevents a person from realizing they are being bitten. Most people do not realize they have been bitten until bite marks appear anywhere from one to several days after the initial bite. The bite marks are similar to that of a mosquito or a flea -- a slightly swollen and red area that may itch and be irritating. The bite marks may be random or appear in a straight line. Other symptoms of bed bug bites include insomnia, anxiety, and skin problems that arise from profuse scratching of the bites.



Because bed bug bites affect everyone differently, some people may have no reaction and will not develop bite marks or any other visible signs of being bitten. Other people may be allergic to the bed bugs and can react adversely to the bites. These allergic symptoms can include enlarged bite marks, painful swellings at the bite site.

How does a person get bed bugs?

Bed bugs do not jump or fly. They are not transmitted like head lice from person to person. They crawl to find a human host. They do not live on humans but rather feed exclusively on blood taken from persons asleep or at rest. Bed bugs are experts at hiding. Their slim flat bodies allow them to fit into the smallest of spaces and stay there for long periods of time, even without a blood meal. Bed bugs are usually transported from place to place as people travel. The bed bugs travel in the seams and folds of luggage, diaper bags, folded clothes, bedding, furniture, and anywhere else where they can hide. Most people do not realize they are transporting stow-away bed bugs as they travel from location to location.

Everyone is at risk for getting bed bugs when visiting an infected area. However, anyone who travels frequently or shares living and sleeping quarters where other people sleep has a higher risk of being bitten and or spreading a bed bug infestation.

Do bed bugs spread disease?

No. Bed bugs should not be considered as a medical or public health hazard. Bed bugs are not known to spread disease. Bed bugs can be an annoyance because their presence may cause itching and loss of sleep. Sometimes the itching can lead to excessive scratching that can sometimes increase the chance of a secondary skin infection

How are bed bugs treated?

Bed bug bites usually do not pose a serious medical threat. The best way to treat a bite is to avoid scratching the area and apply antiseptic creams or lotions and take an antihistamine.

Bed bug infestations should be treated by a professional pest control company. If you suspect that you have an infestation, contact your landlord or professional pest control company that is experienced with treating bed bugs.

How are bed bugs prevented?

Be aware that you might pick up bed bugs in hotel rooms or at family and friend's homes when you are traveling. Check mattress and headboard for signs of an infestation. Even if there are no signs of bed bugs, put your suitcase in the empty bathtub overnight and keep it off the furniture as much as possible.

Carefully check all furniture for signs of bed bugs before you bring it into your home.

The best way to minimize a bed bug infestation is regular inspection for the signs of an infestation. Clutter provides more places for bugs to hide. Getting rid of clutter beforehand helps minimize infestations. Tidiness and regular vacuuming help detect and infestation early, thus making it easier to treat.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

<http://www.epa.gov/bedbugs/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/bedbugs/>

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HOME VISITORS:

- Home visitors should be knowledgeable of the possible signs and symptoms of bed bugs. Home visitors should survey surroundings for signs of a bed bug infestation when entering a home.
- Home visitors should offer assistance in helping families identify and eliminate the infestation of bed bugs which can have a negative impact on the person living in the home.
- If a bed bug infestation is suspected in a home:
 - Ask if the occupant is aware of an infestation
 - Provide bed bug education to family
 - If the home is a rental, assist the family in reporting the infestation to the owner/manager and provide tenant resource bed bug information (see attached Tenant Resource handout)
 - If the home is owned, assist the family in contacting a professional pest control specialist.

BED BUG INFORMATION - FAMILY HANDOUT

Please review the information below regarding bed bugs. If you have any questions contact a Reach Dane nurse or one of the agencies listed below.

Public Health – Madison & Dane County
Green County Health Department

(608) 266-4821
(608) 328-9390

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Suggestions for Decreasing the Risk of Transporting Bed Bugs during Home Visits:

- Home visitors can use a bed bug prevention kit when visiting a client's home
 - Bed bug prevention kit:
 - Large plastic storage bin with cover
 - Sealable plastic bags
 - Large disposable trash bags
 - A change of clothes, socks and shoes
- Clothes and shoes of simple design, to provide fewer hiding places for bed bugs and are thus less likely to transport bed bugs. Home visitors should wear clothes and shoes of simple design. Avoid shoe laces, pants with cuffs, cargo pants. Light colors make it easier to see bed bugs on your cloths.
- Only bring items into the home that are essential to the home visit. Personal belongings such as purses should be secured in the car during home visits. Coats, scarves, hats etc. should also be left in the car during home visits. Use a plastic storage bin to carry work affects. At the end of the visit, return all items to the plastic bin until they can be inspected for bed bugs.
- If in a home with a known bed bug infestation, try not to sit on beds, upholstered furniture or the floor. When sitting, plastic or wooden chairs are preferred.
- After leaving a home, inspect yourself and work affects for bed bugs. Carefully inspect clothes, shoes, and other items before entering the car or another home. Pay close attention to the back of pants, tread of shoes, shoe laces, socks, cuffs and collars. Use a hand mirror to aid in performing self-inspections. Take shoes off and inspect inside and out. Shoes should be wiped off using a wet wipe.
- Found bed begs should be removed from a surface using a wet wipe and disposed of in a sealed plastic bag. Use another wet wipe to wipe down the surround area, paying attention to seams, buttons and pockets.
- If a bed beg is found on your person or belongings, or you believe you have come in contact with bed begs in an infested home, you should, as soon as possible, remove all clothing (ideally on a non-carpeted floor) and immediately place clothing in a sealed plastic bag. The use of a clothes dryer on hot is effective for killing bed bugs. Clothing, including shoes, should be placed in dryer on high for 30 minutes. Cloth or soft work affects that were in the home should be place in the dryer on high for 30 minutes as well. Hard work affects that were in the home should be wiped down with a wet wipe.
- Protect your car:
 - Vacuum regularly and avoid clutter in your car.
 - Vacuum bags which potentially contain bed bugs should be sealed in a plastic bag prior to disposal.
 - Keep home visit equipment in large plastic storage bin or sealed in plastic or Ziploc bags
 - Inspect yourself and belongings before entering car