

## Bed Bug FAQ

### What are bed bugs?

- Bed bugs are small nocturnal insect that lives by feeding on the blood of humans and other warm-blooded hosts. Bedbugs are generally active only at dawn, with a peak feeding period about an hour before sunrise. After feeding for about five minutes, the bug returns to its hiding place.
- Bites consist of a raised red bump or flat welt, and are often accompanied by intense itching. The red bump or welts are the result of an allergic reaction to the anesthetic contained in the bedbug's saliva, which is inserted into the blood of the host. Bed bug bites may appear indistinguishable from mosquito bites, though they tend to last for longer periods. Bites may not become immediately visible, and can take up to 9 days to appear. Bed bug bites tend to not have a red dot in the center such as is characteristic of flea bites. A trait shared with flea bites, however, is tendency towards arrangements of sequential bites. Bites are often aligned three in a row, giving rise to the colloquialism "breakfast, lunch and dinner."
- There have been no known cases of bed bugs passing disease from host to host. Extensive testing has been done in laboratory settings that also conclude that bed bugs are unlikely to pass disease from one person to another. Therefore bedbugs are less dangerous than some more common insects such as the flea.

### How did we get bed bugs?

- Bedbugs were originally brought to the United States by early colonists from Europe. Bedbugs thrive in places with high occupancy, such as hotels. Bedbugs were believed to be altogether eradicated 50 years ago in the United States and elsewhere with the widespread use of DDT.
- One recent theory about bedbug reappearance involves potential geographic epicentres in some states. It was determined that workers in these facilities were the main spreaders of these bedbugs, unknowingly carrying them to their places of residence and elsewhere after leaving work.
- Many years ago, bed bugs were eradicated by the use of a pesticide, DDT. This is no longer used and may account for the resurgence of these bugs in the US, as might the increase in international travel.
- Anyone can pick bed bugs up from a location where they presently exist – someone's apartment, other dorm rooms, movie theatres, etc. Bed bugs are equal opportunity pests – they will infest anyone, anywhere.

### What happens when the exterminator comes to my room?

- If your room or suite is confirmed to have bed bugs, the College's exterminator will come to treat your room. You will be required to bag and remove all clothing, bedding, books and personal items prior to the treatment. Your room will essentially need to be emptied out in order for the treatment to be effective.
- The treatment will likely consist of a few different approaches:
  - A pesticide will be applied to locations within your room that may harbor the bugs.
  - The exterminator may place glue boards in your room. These boards can be good detectives and show the degree of success of the treatment. If the glue board collects bed bugs after its placement, then another treatment may be warranted. If this is the case, you should be back in touch with Student Life as soon as possible.
  - The exterminator and/or Facilities services will perform a THOROUGH and DETAILED vacuuming of your room and belongings. All of your room and items contained within it should be vacuumed on the outside surface and each drawer, crevice, etc. must also be vacuumed. This includes:

|                        |                        |                                   |
|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ▪ Mattress & Bed Frame | ▪ Dresser              | ▪ Personal Furniture              |
| ▪ Desk and Chair       | ▪ Books & Bookshelf    | ▪ Window and Frame                |
| ▪ Inside Closet        | ▪ Blinds               | ▪ Electrical Equipment & Computer |
| ▪ Laundry Basket       | ▪ Pictures and Posters | ▪ Shoes and Shoe Boxes            |
| ▪ Clock, phone         | ▪ Area Rugs            | ▪ Audio or Video Equipment        |
| ▪ Mirror               | ▪ CD Cases             | ▪ Perimeter of the Room           |

- While this process is taking place (a few hours), you will need to be out of your room. Once you are permitted back in your room, you may bring in your freshly laundered clothing and bedding and un-bag your other items.

### **Since I travel quite a bit, what can I do to reduce my risk of bringing these bugs back with me?**

- First, look at the room to seek potential hiding places for bedbugs, such as carpet edges, mattress seams, pillow case linings, head boards, wall trim or other tiny crack-like places bed bugs might hide.
- Next, look specifically at the mattress seams for signs of bed bug activity: droppings, eggs, bloodstains or even bed bugs themselves – hiding in tiny folds and seam lines.
- Never leave your clothing laying on the bed, or any location of possible infestation. Instead, use hangers or hooks capable of keeping all cloth distant from the floor or bed. It's also not a bad idea to elevate suitcases off the floor on a luggage stand, tabletop or other hard surface.
- Close your suitcase, travel bag, when you're not using it. This way, during the night the bugs may move over top of your luggage with greater difficulty to get inside.
- Elevate your luggage off the floor to tables or chairs. These may also be hiding places, but less likely.
- Keep any bed bug you find (intact if possible) to show the hotel owner.
- When you return from any travel (especially abroad) it is a good idea to take your suitcase to the laundromat so you can wash ALL items before taking the suitcase to your home, residence hall, etc. If you do your wash in hot water before entering your residence, you will stop the spread of these bugs.

### **What SHOULD I do if I believe I have bed bugs?**

- Notify Student Life ASAP.
- Be prepared to follow the written instructions **to the letter** and in a timely manner (within 24 hours).

### **What SHOULDN'T I do if I believe I have bed bugs?**

- Don't panic! Although bed bugs can be annoying, they can be battled safely and successfully if you follow all guidelines given to you by Student Life.
- If you believe you have bed bugs, do NOT wait until after 5pm on Friday to notify someone. It is not possible to get service from the exterminator on weekends.
- Do not apply pesticides on your own. The College hires a licensed pest control operator to confirm the infestation and to develop an integrated pest management plan.
- Do not move your mattress or any furniture out into the hallway. Infested furniture can be cleaned and treated. Placing infested furniture (particularly mattresses) into common areas or on the street may simply help spread bed bugs to the rooms and suites of other students.
- Do not go sleep in a friend's room or in places off-campus. If you actually have bed bugs, you will only spread them to others.