

BED BUGS

Bed bugs are parasitic insects that feed on the blood of people and animals during sleep, but are NOT considered to be medical or public health hazards. These insects have not been found to spread disease.



Traditionally bed bugs have been problematic in developing countries, but recently have been spreading rapidly throughout the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and other parts of Europe. They tend to be found near areas where people sleep, including hotels (even 5-star resorts!), cruise ships, apartments, dorms, buses, trains, and other areas where a large number of people may sleep.

Signs of bed bugs include:

- Bite marks on the face, neck, arms, hands, or other body parts while sleeping. These marks tend to develop 1-14 days after being bitten.
- Bed bug exoskeletons after molting,
- Bed bugs found in mattress and sheet folds,
- Rusty-colored blood spots due to blood-filled fecal material excreted by bed bugs on the mattress or nearby furniture,
- Sweet musty odor.

Treatment Options:

For the majority of people, bed bugs are not a serious medical threat. In the majority of cases, the following steps are all that is needed.

- Do not scratch the bites. Scratching increases the risk for infection.
- Apply an antiseptic cream or lotion to the bites.
- Take an over-the-counter antihistamine such as diphenhydramine (Benadryl), cetirizine (Zyrtec), loratadine (Claritin) or fexofenadine (Allegra) as needed to help with itching.

Seek medical care if you experience any of the following:

- Enlarging bite marks
- Pain and/or swelling at the site
- Severe allergic reaction (trouble breathing or swallowing – anaphylaxis) **This is a medical emergency—call for emergency help by dialing 911.**

Pest Management:

If you suspect you have bed bugs:

1. **Dorms:** Notify your RA or area Housing Office
Off-campus: Notify your landlord
2. Remove clutter as it provides hiding places for bed bugs
3. Place all bedding (sheets, mattress covers, bedspreads) in a sealed, plastic bag. Wash and dry on high heat setting.
4. Empty dresser drawers and closets and place contents in a sealed plastic bag. Wash and dry clothes on high heat setting.
5. After washing, store all clothing in tightly closed plastic bags until all insects have been eliminated, normally after two or more treatments.
6. Vacuum and dispose of the vacuum bag (outside the home). If a bagless vacuum is used, deposit all contents of the container into a plastic bag, seal and dispose of outside. Rinse collection container outside before re-attaching to vacuum.
7. Consult a pest management professional before disposing of furniture.
8. Don't bring home new furniture until bed bugs are eliminated.

Additional information can be found at these sites:

- CDC: <http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/bedbugs/faqs.html> ; <http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/bedbugs/biology.html>
- NIH: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/bedbugs.html>

In an emergency go to Mount Nittany Medical Center or call 911 for an ambulance.

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Test Results and Advice Nurse

Send secure message to advice nurse via the UHS website or call 814- 863-4463.

Appointments

Appointments can be made online via the UHS website, by phone 814-863-0774, or in person. If you are unable to keep your appointment, please call or go online to cancel. Otherwise you will be charged for the visit.

This content is reviewed periodically and is subject to change as new health information becomes available. This information is intended to inform and educate and is not a replacement for medical evaluation, advice, diagnosis or treatment by a healthcare professional.