



University of Pennsylvania

A Guide for Bed Bug Response and Control

WHAT ARE BED BUGS (*Cimex lectularius*)?

- Small, reddish brown, wingless insects that are oval in shape; about 1/4 inch long, similar to a tick in appearance, visible to the naked eye.
- They feed on the blood of humans and animals. They do not spread disease but their bites are irritating and can produce itching and welts.
- Named "bed bugs" because they thrive where people sleep. They are attracted to warmth and carbon dioxide from human breath and are often active just before dawn though they may feed at other times. They can live up to 18 months without feeding.
- Generally nocturnal. During the day they hide in crevices, bedframes, mattresses, blankets, pillows, behind picture frames, in drawers, etc.

WHERE DO THEY COME FROM?

- Bed bugs are found all over the world: 5-star hotels, hospitals, dorms, etc. They are spread unknowingly by travelers — not because people are unclean or live in certain environments.
- There is currently a population explosion worldwide because of the banning of certain pesticides and increased global travel.
- They are generally brought to campus in personal belongings such as backpacks, bedding, luggage, and used furniture. Once here, they can move through holes in walls to adjoining rooms.
- Most universities across the U.S. are now publishing fact sheets and developing policies for their students, including travel and move-in tips.

HOW ARE THEY DETECTED AND WHAT SHOULD I DO?

- If you wake up with small bites that itch—particularly if the bites are in a straight line—you might suspect the presence of a bed bug. You should go immediately to Student Health Service at 3535 Market Street (215.746.3535) for observation. While the bites cannot be definitively confirmed as "bed bug bites," and there is no blood test to confirm if bites are from a bed bug, it is important to rule out any other skin conditions. You should give Student Health permission to contact Housing authorities.
- Bed bugs *are visible*, so you should inspect your bedding. You may see a live insect, discarded "shells" from the insects, or small blood stains. **The presence of even a single bed bug is serious, and you should immediately report the problem to Facilities Services by calling 215.898.7208.**

Your RA, GA or SA (Sansom Advisor) should be notified, as well as the House Dean and residents in adjoining rooms as they may require inspection. A very aggressive approach is needed to eradicate this problem so you should never delay or hesitate to report your concerns.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I REPORT BED BUGS?

- You will be contacted by your RSA (Residential Services Administrator) in the Department of Housing Services and interviewed to find out ways that bed bugs might have gotten into your room. This will help to prevent the spread of these pests and determine whether nearby rooms might need treatment as well.
- You will be asked to prepare your room for inspection by the experts Penn has hired to handle pest control.
- Your room will be inspected for bed bugs while you are present. If there are no bed bugs found, your room may be re-inspected. The RSA will keep in touch with you.
- If bed bugs are found, your RSA will help you relocate while extermination takes place; this can take several weeks depending on what the pest control contractor finds.
- Before relocation, you will be asked to bag all your clothing for laundering or dry-cleaning. Anything you take to your temporary living place should be laundered to kill any hitchhiking bed bugs, including your luggage and other similar items.
- Once you have been relocated, the room treatment will begin. This may include steam cleaning, the use of insecticides, carpet removal and replacement, filling of holes, and other procedures.
- All furniture in the room will be treated during this process. Anything that can be cleaned and treated should be left in the room to make sure all the bed bugs are gone from the room. Any furniture that is not salvageable will be removed immediately to make sure the bugs will not spread.
- Your neighbors may also need to be inspected to make sure the bugs have not invaded their rooms as well. Your room will be periodically re-inspected to make sure none of the bugs has survived to start the problem all over again.

HOW CAN I PREVENT BED BUGS IN THE FIRST PLACE?

- Avoid bringing bed bugs to campus by cleaning your luggage and clothing immediately after travel (wash with hot water and use a dryer on the hottest setting). You can also use a steam cleaner on your belongings; bed bugs are killed by heat, not by cold or drug-store insecticides. Remember to keep your luggage away from the bed and floor while away. Use a dresser or luggage rack instead.
- Avoid bringing used furniture into your room, since bed bugs can hide in the tiniest of crevices. You can also purchase a mattress cover to help keep the bugs off your bed.

TO LEARN MORE:

Read more at the following websites or Google "bed bug facts" :

- http://ipm.ifas.ufl.edu/community/structural/bed_bug_IPM.shtml
- www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/publications/Bed_Bugs_CDC-EPA_Statement.htm

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