



Northwest Property Management

780 TEK DRIVE, CRYSTAL LAKE IL 60014
815-459-9187

Established In 1979

Statistics on Bed Bugs

According to a survey released by the National Pest Management Association (NPMA), one in five Americans has either dealt with a bed bug infestation or knows someone who has. The survey, entitled *Bed Bugs in America*, shows just how this recent surge of bed bugs is affecting our lives. Here are a few highlights of the survey:

Americans who have encountered bed bugs tend to be younger, live in urban areas and rent their homes: The incidence of bed bugs is three times higher in urban areas than in rural areas due to factors such as larger population size, apartment living and increased mobility, which are conducive to the rapid spread and breeding of bed bugs.

Bed bugs are found in all 50 states: Specifically, the pests were encountered by 17 percent of respondents in the Northeast; 20 percent in the Midwest; 20 percent in the South; and 19 percent in the West.

Most Americans are concerned about bed bugs and believe that infestations in the United States are increasing: Nearly 80 percent are most concerned about encountering bed bugs at hotels; 52 percent on public transportation; 49 percent in movie theaters; 44 percent in retail stores; 40 percent in medical facilities; 36 percent in their own homes; and 32 percent equally pointed to places of employment and friends' homes. The fear of getting bitten topped the list of concerns.

As the public's awareness of the bed bug resurgence grows, many Americans are modifying their behaviors to minimize their risk of an infestation: Of the precautions being taken, 27 percent have inspected or washed clothing upon returning from a trip, 25 percent have checked a hotel room for bed bugs, 17 percent have inspected or vacuumed a suitcase upon returning from a trip and 12 percent have altered or canceled travel plans because of concern about bed bugs.



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The survey goes on to show that 16 percent inspected second-hand furniture they have brought into their homes, 15 percent have checked dressing rooms when trying on clothing and 29 percent have washed new clothing immediately upon bringing it home from a store.

Of the 13 percent of respondents who said they knew someone who had a bed bug infestation in their home, 40 percent said they avoided entering the infested home and 33 percent discouraged those who had the infestation from entering their own home.

Despite the availability of information, most Americans still have misconceptions about bed bugs: Nearly half of respondents incorrectly believe that bed bugs transmit disease. However, research conducted to date has shown that bed bugs do not transmit disease to their human victims, although some people may experience itchy, red welts. Still, 29 percent inaccurately believe bed bugs are more common among lower income households and 37 percent believe bed bugs are attracted to dirty homes. However, bed bugs do not discriminate in regard to household income and are found in both sanitary and unsanitary conditions.

For more information, visit NPMA's Bed Bug Hub at www.pestworld.org/bed-bugs.