



# BED BUG FACT SHEET

In recent years, there has been a resurgence in the number of bed bugs across the United States. This is due to a change in pesticide use and increased travel. Bed bugs can be easily transported on luggage, clothing, and furniture.

Due to this resurgence, the Laclede County Health Department would like to provide you with some useful information about these parasites. While we hope you will not have to deal with these pests, they have been found in Lebanon recently. Please contact your building manager or the Health Department if you have any questions about this information. Feel free to share this information sheet with others.

## What are bed bugs?

Bed bugs are small, wingless insects with flat, reddish-brown bodies that feed on the blood of humans and other hosts. They are primarily active at night (especially between 2am and 5am) and often hide in the crevices around beds and furniture.



## Where do bed bugs live?

Bed bugs do not only live in beds! They can live in very tiny spaces such as baseboards, electrical outlets, ceiling fans, and underneath or inside electronics.

Other harborages may include:

- In seams of mattresses
- Behind bed headboards & bed frames
- Between cracks & crevices of walls & floor moldings
- Baseboards & where carpeting adjoins walls
- In furniture & dresser drawers
- In seams of curtains
- Behind artwork & outlets

## But I thought bed bugs happened only to dirty people?!

This is a common misconception.

Bed bugs do not have a preference of sanitary conditions. However, to control bed bugs it is helpful to reduce their harborages, which may mean reducing clutter.

## How are bed bugs brought into our homes?

Bed bugs are generally not carried on your person. They move from place to place by “hitchhiking” in or on personal possessions such as bedding, luggage, backpacks, boxes, & furniture. They can come from someone else’s home, taxis, hotels, un-reputable clothing stores, etc.

## How do I know if I have bed bugs?

Since bed bugs are hard to spot because they are small and nocturnal, often the first sign of them is bites. Bites can come from many sources besides bed bugs, so if you suspect that bed bugs are present, it is important to investigate. It is often helpful to look for signs in your mattress as well. Small brownish/red spots on your mattress or

sheets may be an indication you have bed bugs.

## Can I get a disease from bed bugs?

Bed bugs are not known to transmit diseases.

## How do I get rid of bed bugs?

Standard consumer pest sprays are not helpful for managing bed bugs. So, get your building manager involved immediately. The SOONER they are involved, the EASIER to rid yourselves of the pests! They will have specific guidelines for you, but you should consider:

- Begin by carefully inspecting your residence for places that bed bugs can hide.
- Eliminate as many bed bug-friendly hiding places as possible.
- Wash and dry all washable items and treat non-washable items with extreme heat or cold, & thoroughly inspect them. If you are getting rid of any potentially infested items, be sure to label them “contaminated” so no one picks them up from the trash.

- Avoid having guests in your residence. Bed bugs may “hitchhike” on their clothing or bags. You should also avoid visiting other people in case any bed bugs have attached to your clothing or bags.

### **What can your building manager do when bed bugs are discovered?**

We take this problem very seriously and have an integrated pest management program in place to deal with cases when they are brought to our attention. We employ a licensed, experienced pest control management company, whose employees are trained to identify and eradicate bed bugs.

### **How can I prevent be bugs from entering my residence?**

- Educate yourself about bed bugs.
- Only purchase furniture from reputable vendors. Some vendors remarket used furniture as new.
- Inspect furniture before it is brought into your building or apartment.
- Do not bring furniture or other items into your residence that you find on the street.
- If you are exposed to bed bugs outside your residence, clean & inspect everything that has been exposed before bringing it into your space.
- If you suspect bed bugs, act quickly to determine if they are present so you can respond promptly. Don't be ashamed or embarrassed to discuss bed bugs. They are not an indicator

of how clean/unclean you are. It's better to get the proper people involved instead of ignoring potential bed bug outbreaks. They only get worse.

### **How can I avoid re-infestation?**

We need your help to avert and contain future cases of bed bugs. As bed bugs are brought into buildings in the belongings of people, here is what you can do to help:

- *Learn to identify bed bugs.* Review the section of this fact sheet that describes bed bugs & consult other resources listed below so you can identify bed bugs. Also be on the lookout for signs of their presence such as blood spots on sheets or an unexplained “rash” on your body.
- *If you discover or suspect bed bugs, immediately contact your building manager.* Do **NOT** attempt to eradicate them yourself. Successful treatment must be carried out by a trained professional.
- *Seek assistance at your local doctor's office.* If you find a rash or marks on your body or blood spots on your sheets. The staff at your physician's office can provide information on how to care for any bites you may have received.
- *Inspect your bed periodically.* Check for blood spots on your sheets. Lift bedding and mattress. Check in seams, between bedposts & slats, & behind headboards. Use a flashlight at night.

- *Clean and reduce the clutter in your room* to eliminate places for bed bugs to hide during the day.
- *Wash clothes and linens frequently in hot water and dry in dryer to kill any possible bugs.*
- *Thoroughly check second hand furniture items and before you bring second hand clothing into your home, wash and dry it on high heat.*
- *When traveling,* take precautions to help prevent bringing bed bugs back home with you. Inspect the bed you will be using as described above. Check the room, including behind wall hangings. Don't put your suitcases directly on your bed; whenever possible, elevate them on a luggage rack.
- *Before returning home,* inspect your clothes and other items before packing. Check crevices in suitcases and bags.
- *After returning home,* recheck all traveling gear and items within when you unpack. If possible, treat them with extreme heat by leaving them in a car trunk for several hours or drying them. Don't put your suitcase or bags on or under your bed.

### **Where can I get more information about bed bugs?**

[www.bedbugcentral.com](http://www.bedbugcentral.com)

