



Bed Bugs Fact Sheet

The Office of Residence Life & Housing

In recent years, bed bugs have made a resurgence in the US. Unfortunately, MSU residence halls have not been immune. While we've had some cases of bedbugs, we have been able to effectively eliminate them. However, there is always the potential for more to occur. The following information is being provided to educate residents about bed bugs and to instruct what to do if bedbugs are suspected in your room. If you have questions, please contact your hall staff or The Office of Residence Life & Housing at 443-885-3217.

What is a bed bug?

Adult bed bugs are slightly smaller than a lady bug or about 3/8 of an inch long, and are reddish-brown in color with flat oval shaped bodies. They are nocturnal feeders who live in the "nests" of hosts. Bed bugs do not fly or leap; they hide in dark crevices close to food sources and can live for months without feeding.

Are bed bugs a concern here?

Bed bugs are most common in places where many people sleep. Bed bugs can easily travel on clothing, linens, and furniture and are spread by hitchhiking from areas of infestation. Infestations of bed bugs do not necessarily indicate poor hygiene.

Can bed bugs hurt me?

Although bites can cause severe itching they are relatively harmless. When a bed bug bites it releases a salivary fluid that can irritate skin and cause allergic reactions over time. Bed bugs are not known to transmit any blood borne diseases such as HIV or AIDS.

Do I have bed bugs?

Bedbugs bites are identified by small welts similar to mosquito bites that often these welts occur in rows of three or more and cause itching and discomfort. These bites show up in the morning or middle of the night.

If bedbugs are present tiny dark excrement stains may be on sheets, pillowcases, and mattresses. Molted skins and egg shells may also be present, but look for the crawling or dead adults as well. In cases of severe infestation a musty sweet smell may be detected.

To check for evidence of bed bugs, examine areas around the bed and sleeping quarters for signs of bed bug activity. Bed bugs prefer areas around fabric, wood and paper. Check the folds or seams in bedding and linens. Check seams, corners, and buttons on mattresses and box springs. Check bedroom furniture especially around the headboard and footboard paying special attention to corners and crevices. Check baseboards, moldings and carpet seams near and around the bed. Bed bugs often travel up so check areas above the level where you sleep. Check artwork and wall hangings, curtains, and walls. Look for any excrement spots, skin casings, or live bugs.

What if I have bed bugs, or think I may have them?

Please contact your Resident Assistant or Resident Director as soon as possible so they can contact the Housekeeping and Maintenance Department. If you cannot find your Resident Assistant or Resident Director, Director, please contact the Associate Director of Operations for The Office of Residence Life & Housing at 443-885-3217. A case of bed bugs can only be confirmed after it is inspected by the University contracted Pest Control company.

How do I reduce the chance of getting bed bugs?

- Do not bring infested items in to your room.
- Thoroughly inspect any "freebie" or second hand furniture or accessories before you bring them into your room or apartment.
- Check luggage, clothing and bedding after trips, especially after extended break periods and trips abroad.
- Clean up and reduce clutter to eliminate some of their favorite hiding spots.
- Vacuum crevices and upholstery regularly. Vacuum mattresses frequently or permanently encase mattress in a mattress bag.
- Pull bed away from wall or other furniture. Tuck in sheets and blankets to avoid contact with the floor or walls.