

What You Should Know About Bed Bugs

Bed bugs are a growing, worldwide problem brought about by increased travel and decreased use of pesticides. Fortunately, cases of bed bugs are rare at USD with only a few confirmed cases occurring in recent years. However, the University takes every report of possible bed bugs very seriously and has implemented a comprehensive pest management program to address cases when they are brought to our attention. We partner with Terminix, a licensed, experienced pest control management company, whose employees are trained to identify and eradicate bed bugs if confirmed.

What are bed bugs?

Adult bed bugs are 1/4 to 3/8 inch long, brown in color, with a flat, oval-shaped body; while young bed bugs (also called nymphs) are smaller and lighter in color.

While bed bugs do not transmit disease, they are attracted to warmth, blood and the carbon dioxide emitted by our bodies. Bed bugs are so named because they are nocturnal and thrive best in beds where people sleep. During the day, they hide in crevices, bed frames, mattresses, inside drawers of furniture, in clothes discarded on floors, and in other spaces where they are not easily detected.

How do you identify bed bug infestations?

When cleaning, changing beddings, or staying away from home, look for physical signs of bed bugs:

- Dark spots
- Eggs and eggshells (which are tiny and white)
- Skins that nymphs shed as they grow larger
- Live bed bugs
- Red blood spots on bed sheets or an unexpected “rash” or bites on your body.

Inspect your backpack periodically. Do not place your backpack on or under your bed.

70% of bed bugs are in the bed (mattress, box spring, or frame)

20% of bed bugs are in the upholstered furniture

7% of bed bugs are in the picture frames, electrical outlets, and wall moldings

3% (if any) of bed bugs are in the kitchen

All food left out in full view will be inspected by Terminix prior to treatment.

Note:

- Bed bugs will not go near the refrigerator so all food inside the refrigerator can remain after bed bugs are detected.
- All food out on the counter such as fruits and vegetables (and any other item) should remain uninfected. A way to be proactive to keep those foods safe from all pests would be to put them in a secure closed container. Terminix will be able to determine by looking at food whether bed bugs are present but the odds are low.
- Canned foods or any other food in a secure container anywhere in the kitchen (including cabinets) are safe from bed bugs.

- Dried foods that aren't sealed such as pasta or rice are the most likely place a bed bug might reside but after putting these foods in the microwave for 30 seconds it will kill any eggs or bed bugs that may be present.
- Shoes, drapes, bedding, stuffed animals, and clean clothing DO NOT need to be laundered. They can be put into the dryer at the HIGH setting for 30 minutes to kill the bed bugs.
- Always secure clothing and other items such as the ones listed above in trash bags or sealed containers immediately to take to the laundry room to then immediately place in the dryer.

How do you prevent bed bug infestations?

While bed bugs are generally not carried on your person, they can be transported in personal possessions such as bedding, suitcases, backpacks, boxes, clothing, and furniture.

Below are some precautions that you can take to prevent bed bugs from following you home:

- Check secondhand furniture, beds, and couches for any signs of bed bug infestation (as described above).
- Use a protective cover that encases mattresses and box springs and eliminates many hiding spots. The light color of the encasement makes bed bugs easier to see.
- Clean and reduce clutter in your room to reduce hiding places for bed bugs.

When traveling:

- In hotel rooms, use luggage racks to hold your luggage when packing or unpacking rather than setting your luggage on the bed or floor.
- Check the mattress and headboard before sleeping.
- Upon returning home, unpack directly into a washing machine and inspect your luggage carefully.

What does USD do when bed bugs are reported?

The Department of Residential Life partners with Terminix in order to quickly respond when bed bugs are suspected. Terminix employs 41 specialists (including 23 certified entomologists and 4 PhD entomologists) with more than 1,100 years of industry experience between them. If Terminix confirms that there are bed bugs in your room, your Community Director will provide you with a detailed protocol of the next steps involved.

Please do not attempt to eradicate bed bugs on your own. Successful treatment must be performed by a trained professional. Therefore, if you suspect that bed bugs are present, immediately contact the Office of Residential Life at (619) 260-4777 during regular business hours or your R.A. or the Department of Public Safety during non business hours.