

bed bug basics for parents

what are they?

Bed bugs are small, brownish, flattened insects that feed on the blood of people while they sleep. Although the bite does not hurt at the time, it may develop into an itchy welt similar to a mosquito bite. Bed bugs do not transmit disease, but they can cause significant itchiness, anxiety and sleeplessness.

Usually, bed bugs will hide during the day and only come out to feed during the night. Unlike head lice, they do not live on a person. However, they can hitchhike from one place to another in backpacks, clothing, books and other items.



will my child be sent home?

If a bed bug is found on a child or a child's belongings, the child will be discreetly removed from the classroom to keep his or her identity, and the classroom, in confidence, and to preserve the student's emotional and physical health during the process. A designated staff member can examine clothing and other belongings. If any bugs are seen, the student may be asked to change into clothing provided by the school; the student's clothing will be placed in a zip lock bag and sent home with the student at the end of the school day (or can be washed and dried at the school for use the following day).

In most instances, students won't be excluded from school or child care due to bed bugs. If a confirmed bed bug is found on your child, the school principal, nurse or program director will contact you by phone.

Schools and child care centers should not be closed due to the discovery of bed bugs. Infestation of a school or child care center building is unlikely, but may become a source of dispersal to others in the environment.

what can i do?

If you suspect bed bugs at home or at your child's school, contact your school nurse, principal or the Lexington-Fayette County Health Department to find out more information about how to proceed.

If you have bed bugs at home, you should store your child's freshly laundered clothing in sealed plastic bags until they are put on in the morning. Backpacks, lunchboxes and other items that travel back and forth to school should also be inspected daily and stored in sealed plastic containers. Also, take a close look at bedding and bedroom furniture in your residence (look for blood or small dark spots, especially in and around the seams of the mattress). Look for any marks on your skin, especially in the morning; bed bugs usually bite while people are sleeping.

Landlords and apartment owners should treat their premise when notified of bed bugs. During treatment, tenants are responsible for their belongings (including furniture, mattresses, clothing, etc.).



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a pre-treatment checklist for parents

how to prepare when eliminating bed bugs from your home

When a home is treated to eliminate bed bugs, it is imperative that a homeowner or tenant follow a pre-treatment checklist prior to the arrival of the pest management professional (PMP). Not preparing the infested area greatly diminishes the ability of the PMP to correct the problem and the results will be compromised. The following is an example checklist for preparing a room or unit for treatment:

- ☐ Remove bed linens, pillowcases, bed pads, curtains, clothing and furniture dressings. Place in sealed bags; take to the laundry facility to be washed and dried.

- ☐ Wash linens in hot water with temperatures above 120°F. Dry them using the hottest cycle available, and place in clean bags and seal. Never place clean clothing or bed sheets into used plastic bags; always use fresh and new plastic bags.



- ☐ Mattresses must be removed from bed frames; mattresses and box springs should be stood straight up. Headboards should be removed from wall.
- ☐ Empty closets, bedside tables and bureau drawers for inspection and treatment and place items in clean clear plastic bags that close tightly.
- ☐ Make sure the room perimeter is accessible for inspection and treatment. Remove anything that could be in the PMP's way; move furniture away from walls.
- ☐ Remove picture frames, clocks, posters and wall hangings from walls.
- ☐ Pick up everything from the floor that could be considered an obstacle, especially in rooms where bed bugs are present or suspected. Check each item thoroughly before putting into a bin or bag.
- ☐ Make sure locked rooms and closets are left open for inspection and treatment.
- ☐ Remove all electrical outlet and light switch plates. Remove wall mounted lights if applicable. Reinstall 24 hours after completion of treatment.

