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ADULT HEALTH BULLETIN

JULY 2012

THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: BED BUGS

Summer is in full swing and you may have summer vacation on your mind. Travel is much easier these days but so is the possibility of bringing home pests from your vacation, specifically bed bugs. You may have seen many of the recent headlines that bed bugs are making a comeback, especially in hotels around the country. For most people, bed bugs are only known because of a nursery rhyme. However, they are an increasing problem within the United States.

What is a bed bug?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture all consider bed bugs to be a public health pest. Bed bugs are not known to transmit diseases but they can cause redness and swelling from their saliva during feeding. Bed bugs feed on blood and humans are their preferred food. Pets can also be hosts. Generally, bed bugs are nocturnal, meaning they come out at night.

Signs you may have bed bugs

There are several signs that you may have bed bugs in your home. The more signs you see, the more likely it is that you have bed bugs.



Photo: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Signs include:

- Bites
- Blood spots or stains on clothes or sheets
- Shed skins
- Dead bugs
- Live bugs

If you find bugs in your house that might be bed bugs, save them in a re-sealable bag. Have an expert confirm that they are bed bugs. There

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Read hotel reviews to see if anyone has previously reported bed bugs.



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are other pests that look like bed bugs. A professional pest control company can help you to determine how severe the infestation is and what the recommended plan of action should be.

You can help reduce bed bug hiding places by reducing clutter in your home.

Travel tips

With the increased problem, you may want to check your hotel room for signs of bed bugs. Here are some tips:

- Look at the sheets on the bed and the seams on the mattress and box spring. Do not forget to check the head of the bed.
- Look inside the dresser drawers, in the closet and along the baseboards for signs of bugs, shed skins or stains.
- Look for any rusty or reddish stains on the mattress or sheets.

If you find any signs of bed bugs:

- Request another room (far away from the current room).

- Keep suitcases off of the floor on a luggage stand, table or other hard surface.

When you get home, wash all clothing in the washing machine as soon as possible. Examine luggage for signs that you may have brought home bed bugs.

If you have Internet access, it may be worth reading hotel reviews to see if anyone has previously reported bed bugs at the hotels you are considering.

In your own home you can prevent bed bug infestation in a few simple ways:

- Put a protective cover over the mattress and box spring. You will want a high quality one to resist tearing. Make sure to check the protective cover for tears regularly.
- Do not place items under beds for storage.
- If you are able to reduce clutter in your home, you can reduce bed bug hiding places.

You should be aware of the signs of bedbugs and remember to check for them even when you are away from home.

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