

What You Should Know About Bedbugs

Bedbugs are a growing, worldwide problem. They have been found in five-star hotels, college residence halls, hospitals, and virtually all other types of housing throughout the United States. Much of the resurgence of bedbugs has been brought about by increased travel and decreased use of DDT, a pesticide previously used by exterminators to control bedbugs. While infestations of bedbugs are not a reflection of poor hygiene or bad housekeeping and do not transmit diseases to people, they have been widely publicized in the press and carry significant stigma. In addition, if not properly and quickly addressed, infestations of bed bugs can multiply and migrate into adjacent areas.

Student Life and Facilities takes bedbugs and other pests very seriously and has a pest management program in place to deal with suspected cases when they are brought to our attention. We employ Arrow Exterminators, a licensed, experienced pest control management company, whose employees are trained to identify and eradicate bedbugs.

Given that over 1,000 students and visitors from around the world live and stay in University of Dallas residence halls each year, we are fortunate to have had only one minor case since bedbugs resurfaced on a large scale in the United States a few years ago. Our peer institutions and Texas colleges and universities have also reported infrequent cases of bedbugs.

What are bedbugs?

Bedbugs have co-existed with humans for millennia. They are small, flat, oval, wingless insects (about one-fifth of an inch) that are visible to the naked eye. Like mosquitoes, they are unpleasant pests that can cause physical discomfort by biting humans to feed on blood. However, unlike mosquitoes, they do not transmit disease. The first sign of a bedbug is often a rash or bite mark and blood spots on linens.

Bedbugs are hardy creatures that can live for up to 18 months without feeding and are able to withstand extreme temperature changes. They are nocturnal and crawl at a steady rate. During the day, they hide in crevices, bed frames, mattresses and box springs, behind electrical outlet covers and picture frames, inside drawers of furniture, in clothes discarded on the floor, and in other spaces where they are not easily detected. They are called bedbugs because they thrive best in beds where people sleep.

How are bedbugs brought onto campus?

Bedbugs are generally not carried on your person, but they can be carried in personal possessions such as bedding, suitcases, backpacks, boxes, and furniture.

What should I do if I suspect I have bedbugs?

- If you suspect or discover bedbugs, immediately contact Student Life or Facilities. You can contact Facilities at worders@udallas.edu and x5295 and Student Life at bboop@udallas.edu and x5323.
- If you find a rash or marks on your body or blood spots on your sheets, seek assistance at the Health Center.
- If possible, try to gather a sample of the suspected insects in a sealed plastic bag.
- Do not attempt to eradicate them yourself. Successful treatment must be carried out by a trained professional.
- Students renting off-campus housing have the same rights and responsibilities to a safe, healthy dwelling that all renters have in the State of Texas. If you suspect a bed bug infestation, follow the same basic actions outlined in this document, working with your landlord or building manager instead of the University contacts.

What happens after I report bed bugs?

- Facilities will arrange for your room to be inspected. Depending upon the condition of your room, you may be asked to prepare your room for the inspection.
- If no bed bugs are found, your room may be re-inspected at a later date.

What happens if bed bugs are found?

- If bed bugs are found, Arrow Exterminators will treat the room. This may include steam cleaning, the use of insecticides, filling holes and other procedures.

- You will be contacted by Student Life or Facilities and interviewed to find out ways that bed bugs might have come to be in your room. This will help to prevent the spread of these pests.
- Neighboring rooms may also be inspected to make sure the bugs have not invaded those rooms as well.
- You will be asked to launder or dry-clean all your bedding and clothing.
- Student Life will let you know if you will need to relocate while extermination takes place. Anything you take to your temporary living place should be laundered to kill any hitchhiking bed bugs, including your luggage and other similar items.
- All furniture in the room will be treated during this process. Anything that can be cleaned and treated should be left in the room to make sure all the bed bugs are eradicated from the room.
- Any furniture that is not salvageable will be removed immediately to make sure the bugs will not spread.
- Your room may be periodically re-inspected to make sure none of the bugs has survived to start the problem all over again.

What can I do to help?

Though bedbugs are very rare at the University of Dallas, and we have had only one isolated case in recent years, we need your assistance to avert and contain future cases. As bedbugs are brought into buildings in the belongings of people, here is what you can do to help:

- *Avoid bringing bed bugs to campus* by inspecting and cleaning your luggage and clothing immediately before returning to campus. Wash bedding and clothing in hot water and use a dryer on the hottest setting. You can also use a steam cleaner on your belongings; bed bugs are killed by heat, not by drugstore insecticides.
- *After returning to campus*, recheck all traveling gear and items when you unpack. Don't put your suitcase or backpack on or under your bed.
- *Wash clothes and linens frequently in hot water and dryer to kill any possible bugs.*
- *Clean and reduce the clutter in your room* to eliminate places for bedbugs to hide during the day.
- *Don't bring second-hand furniture items onto campus.* They can be common breeding grounds for bedbugs.
- *Inspect your bed periodically.* Check for blood spots on your sheets. Lift bedding and mattress. Check in seams, between bedposts and slats, and behind headboards. Use a flashlight at night.
- *Inspect your backpack periodically.* Bedbugs can hide in backpacks. Check seams and pouches throughout your backpack for bugs or eggs. Do not place your backpack on or under your bed.
- *When traveling*, take precautions. Keep your luggage away from the bed and floor while away; elevate your luggage on a dresser or luggage rack instead. Inspect the bed you will be using as described above. Check the room, including behind wall hangings.

Other resources

There are many good resources on bedbugs. Check the web sites listed below or do a keyword search in your favorite internet search portal such as Google or Yahoo.

www.cdc.gov/nceh/ehs/publications/Bed_Bugs_CDC-EPA_Statement.htm

www.nysipm.cornell.edu/publications/bed_bugs/files/bed_bug.pdf

<http://ohioline.osu.edu/hyg-fact/2000/2105.html>

www.entm.purdue.edu/publichealth/insects/bedbug.html

Our commitment to you

We hope that the information in this fact sheet provides you a better understanding of this problem, the actions Student Life and Facilities are taking to address it, and what you can do to help. Providing a safe living environment for our students and residential visitors at the University of Dallas is priority. Please know that everyone on our staff is committed to doing everything practical to manage the impact of this worldwide problem on our campus. If you have further questions, contact Student Life or Facilities.