



# WICOMICO COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

## BED BUGS

### Fact Sheet

#### **What are bed bugs?**

Bed bugs are small, reddish-brown wingless insects that feed on human blood. They are about the size of a lady bug or an apple seed. Bed bugs do not fly; they either crawl or are carried from place to place in a person's belongings. Before a bed bug feeds on blood, its body looks flat with a circle shaped abdomen; however, after it has fed, the body lengthens and becomes narrow. Bed bugs can survive for weeks to months without feeding on a host.

#### **Do bed bugs affect humans?**

Bed bugs feed at night when people are sleeping. The bite of a bed bug is usually painless, and a person may not even know they have been bitten until a large itchy welt appears on their skin several days later. Some people do not react to bed bug bites. While these bites may be a nuisance, bed bugs are not known to transmit disease to humans.

#### **How does a home become infested with bed bugs?**

In most cases, people carry bed bugs into their homes unknowingly, in infested luggage, furniture, bedding or clothing. Bed bugs may also travel between apartments through small crevices and cracks in walls and floors.

#### **How do I know if my home is infested with bed bugs?**

You may notice itchy skin welts. You may also see the bed bugs themselves, small bloodstains from crushed insects, or dark spots from their droppings. It is often hard to find them because they hide in or near beds, other furniture and in cracks.

#### **Should I use a pest control company?**

The Wicomico County Health Department recommends homeowners hire a licensed pest control company to handle a possible bed bug infestation. For a list of licensed companies, please visit [www.mda.state.md.us](http://www.mda.state.md.us).

#### **How can I keep bed bugs out of my home?**

- Wash clothing and inspect luggage immediately after returning from a trip.
- Inspect used furniture for bed bugs before bringing it into your home.
- Never bring discarded bed frames, mattresses, box springs, or upholstered furniture into your home.

#### **How can I keep my furniture from infesting someone else's home?**

- Never resell or donate infested furniture or clothing.
- If you throw infested furniture away, make it undesirable to others by cutting or poking holes in it. Tape a sign to it that says, "Infested with Bed Bugs."

This fact sheet and additional information on bed bugs is available at [www.wicomicohealth.org](http://www.wicomicohealth.org).