

## Our Mission

Through quality and timely customer service, it is the mission of Environmental Health to serve and educate the residents of Wicomico County in the essential functions of environmental public health, including:

- ♦ Drinking water
- ♦ Sewage disposal
- ♦ Food safety
- ♦ Recreational water safety
- ♦ Clean indoor air
- ♦ Rabies

## Our Vision

To provide superior customer service and to ensure the highest quality of environmental health in Wicomico County.



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**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

**Wicomico County  
Health Department**

## **BED BUGS: PREVENTION AND CONTROL**



**(410) 546-4446**

# BED BUGS: PREVENTION AND CONTROL

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### What are bed bugs?

Bed bugs are small insects that feed solely on the blood of people and animals while they sleep. Bed bugs are reddish-brown in color, wingless, roughly the size of Lincoln's head on a penny. They can live anywhere, not just in beds. **Bed bugs are not transmitted person to person.**

### Do bed bugs spread disease?

Bed bugs should not be considered as a medical or public health hazard. Bed bugs are not known to spread disease, but can be an annoyance because their presence may cause itching and loss of sleep. Excessive scratching can sometimes increase the chance of a secondary skin infection.



## PREVENTION

Bed bugs are experts at hiding. Their slim flat bodies allow them to fit into the smallest of spaces and stay there for long periods of time. Bed bugs travel in the seams and folds of luggage, overnight bags, folded clothes, bedding, furniture, and anywhere else where they can hide. Most people do not realize they are transporting stow-away bed bugs as they travel from location to location.

Bed bugs can enter homes by latching onto used furniture, luggage and clothing. Remember:

- Never bring bed frames, mattresses, box springs or upholstered furniture found on the street into your home.
- Check all used or rented furniture for bed bugs.
- When traveling, inspect the bed and furniture. Keep suitcases off the floor and bed, and inspect them before you leave.
- Seal cracks and crevices with caulk, even if you don't have bed bugs. This will help prevent bed bugs and other pests from coming in.

## CONTROL

If you have bed bugs, you shouldn't feel ashamed. Anyone can get bed bugs. Follow these steps to remove an infestation:

- Vacuum along mattress seams, baseboards, and other areas.
- Wash all bedding and clothing in hot (120°F) water and dry in a hot dryer.
- Consider steam cleaning.
- If possible, replace infested mattresses.
- Specially-designed mattress encasements may be helpful.
- Serious infestations may require insecticide treatment.
- Hire an experienced and licensed pest control professional. They have access to the most effective products.

