

Bed Bugs

Clinical Description:

Bed bugs are reddish brown, flat insects that are about ¼ inch long when fully grown. Unlike lice and scabies mites, they **do not** live on the human body. They hide in cracks and crevices near sleeping areas, especially mattresses, box springs and headboards. Bed bugs usually feed on the blood of humans during the night-time hours then return to their hiding places. Some people may experience itching, pain and/or swelling of the skin where a bed bug bite occurs (such as the arms, face or back) within a day or two after a bite. Although the bites can cause considerable discomfort and loss of sleep, bed bugs **do not** transmit disease after feeding on multiple hosts.

Incubation Period:

Bed bugs go through five immature or nymphal stages before becoming adults. A blood meal is required for a nymph to molt and progress to the next stage. Under ideal circumstances, development from egg to adult takes around one month. In a school environment, there are not suitable feeding hosts present at night, so development of an infestation in a school is unlikely.

Mode of Transmission:

Bed bugs are renowned hitch-hikers. Bed bugs are spread through the acquisition of infested second-hand furniture or by hiding on items used during travel, such as suitcases, outerwear and other belongings. They can occasionally be brought into schools via a book bag, clothing or other personal items from an existing infestation in a home. Though the risk is low, bed bugs could be transferred to another individual's belongings if they are stored in close proximity.

Period of Communicability:

Transmission of bed bugs could occur at any time if present.

Exclusion/Reporting:

It is not generally suggested that a student or staff member be excluded from school if a bed bug is found on their person or belongings. Parents or guardians of the student should be notified to alert them of a potential infestation. Educational materials should also be provided. Bed bugs are not listed as a reportable communicable disease in the ISDH Communicable Disease Reporting Rule (410 IAC 1-2.3) at [http://www.in.gov/isdh/files/comm_dis_rule\(1\).pdf](http://www.in.gov/isdh/files/comm_dis_rule(1).pdf).

Prevention/Care:

If it is determined that an individual has brought a bed bug into school, several steps may be taken to avoid spreading the infestation to others. If a home infestation is identified, the individual's belongings should be stored separately until the home situation is remedied. Upon arrival at school, the student or staff member could be sensitively and discreetly examined each day by the school nurse for the presence of bed bugs on their belongings. In the home environment, items routinely transported from home to school could be stored in plastic bins at both locations to avoid picking up bugs. Routine pest control programs for roaches, ants, and other common household pests do not protect against bed bugs. Widespread treatment of a school specifically for bed bugs is generally not advised or effective. Consult a reputable pest control company if there is a concern.

Outbreaks:

An infestation of bed bugs in a school is unlikely, but inspection by a reputable pest control company can be performed if desired.

Other Resources:

Indiana State Department of Health Quick Facts Page (found on disease/condition page):

<http://bit.ly/12IJLfD>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

<http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/bedbugs/>

Michigan Department of Community Health Document on Bed Bugs in Schools

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/emergingdiseases/Bed_bugs_schools_293498_7.pdf

University of Kentucky Dept. of Entomology Bed Bug Page

<http://www.ca.uky.edu/entomology/entfacts/entfactpdf/ef636.pdf>

Purdue University Bed Bug Page

<http://extension.entm.purdue.edu/publichealth/insects/bedbug.html>

University of Florida "Bed Bugs and Book Bags" Educator Training

http://duval.ifas.ufl.edu/Bed_Bugs.shtml