

What You Should Know About Bedbugs

A worldwide problem.

Bedbugs are a growing, worldwide problem brought about by increased travel and decreased use of pesticides. Bedbugs have been found in five-star hotels, college residence halls, hospitals, and virtually all other types of housing throughout the United States. Given the nearly 20,000 students and summer visitors from around the world who live in NIU Housing each year, we are fortunate to have not had many cases since bedbugs resurfaced on a large scale in the United States a few years ago.

What are bedbugs?

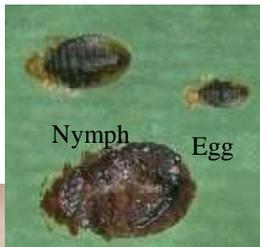
Bedbugs are small, flat, oval, wingless insects (about one-fifth of an inch in length) that are visible to the naked eye. They crawl at a steady rate. Like mosquitoes, they bite humans to feed on blood, but unlike mosquitoes, they do not transmit disease. They are hardy creatures that can live for up to 18 months without feeding and are able to withstand extreme temperature changes.

Bedbugs are so named because they are nocturnal and thrive best in beds where people sleep. During the day, they hide in crevices, bed frames, mattresses and box springs, behind electrical outlet covers and picture frames, inside drawers of furniture, within pleats of curtains, in clothes discarded on the floor, and in other spaces where they are not easily detected. The first sign of a bedbug is often a rash or bite mark and blood spots on linens.

Bedbug Life Cycle



Adult Bedbug



Adult

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 does NIU do when bedbugs are discovered?

NIU takes this problem very seriously and has an integrated pest management program in place to deal with cases when they are brought to our attention. NIU Environmental Health and Safety in cooperation with Housing and Dining Services has developed a program which includes a licensed, experienced pest control management company, whose employees are trained to identify and eradicate bedbugs. If a case is confirmed you should be prepared to vacate the premises after treatment for a couple of hours. When Environmental Health and Safety, and the pest control company arrives they must have access to all areas within the room, including areas that are normally locked.

What is NIU doing to prevent bedbugs?

In addition to our response protocol in the event of individual instances of bedbug infestation, NIU is engaged in ongoing proactive measures to prevent and contain future cases. These include educational materials for students and staff training developed by Environmental Health and Safety.

What can I do to help?

Although Bed Bugs are not considered a normal part of our environment, they have become a problem pest in most communities. 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:

Learn to identify bedbugs.

Review the section of this fact sheet that describes bedbugs and consult other resources listed below so you can identify bedbugs. Also be on the lookout for signs of their presence such as blood spots on sheets or an unexplained "rash" on your body.

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.

Clean and reduce the clutter in your room.

This eliminates places for bedbugs to hide during the day.

Wash clothes and linens frequently in hot water and dryer to kill any possible bugs.

The items should be laundered in hot water. Alternatively, items can be put in the dryer at the hot setting for at least 20 minutes.

Don't bring second-hand furniture items or rugs onto campus.

They can be common breeding grounds for bedbugs.

When traveling,

Take precautions to help prevent bringing bedbugs back to campus with you. Inspect the bed you will be using as described above. Check the room, including behind wall hangings. Don't put your suitcase or backpack directly on your bed; whenever possible, elevate them on a luggage rack.

Before returning to campus,

Inspect your clothes and other items before packing. Check crevices in suitcases and backpacks.

After returning to campus,

Re-check all traveling gear and items within when you unpack. Don't put your suitcase or backpack on or under your bed.

What do I do if I think I have bedbugs?

If you discover or suspect bedbugs, contact the Work Request Office 815-753-4948. **After hours, please call your front desk for instructions.**

Do not attempt to eradicate them yourself. Successful treatment must be carried out by a trained professional.

To prepare for a pest control visit for suspected bedbugs:

Immediately remove,

All sheets, blankets, mattress covers, pillowcases, etc. from your beds and wash them in a standard washing machine with laundry soap. Bedding and items that can't be washed, should be placed in a hot dryer for 20 minutes. Fold the items and place them in plastic bags that can be found in the Janitor's Closet on each floor. Leave in the room.

Remove everything from bedroom and hall closets.

Your closets must be empty. Take everything out of night stands, dressers, and other furniture near the beds. Dresser drawers and night stands must be empty. You can place items in plastic bags found in the Janitor's Closet on each floor. Leave the bags in the room.

Also, make sure there are no animals or people in the room

During and after treatment until materials have dried or a minimum of two hours.

Further questions.

If you have further questions, contact the Work Request Office at 815-753-4948 or Environmental Health and Safety at 815-753-0404 or:

Visit the EH&S web site at:

<http://www.niu.edu/ehs>

Other resources.

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

University of Kentucky-College of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service

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

Ohio State University Extension

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

Harvard School of Public Health

<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/bedbugs/>

MayoClinic.com

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/bedbugs/DS00663>

Our commitment to you.

We hope that the information in this fact sheet provides you a better understanding of this problem, the actions NIU is taking to address it, and what you can do to help. Providing a safe living environment for our students and residential visitors is NIU's highest priority. Please know that everyone on our staff is committed to doing everything possible to manage the impact of this worldwide problem on our campus.

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**Northern Illinois
University**

Bed Bug Information for Students



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Housing & Dining

*Division of Student Affairs &
Enrollment Management*

