

THE FACTS ON BED BUGS AND SCHOOLS

Bed bugs have re-emerged as a pest all over the nation, including Alexandria. Get the facts about bed bugs and learn how to protect your children and your home.



What are bed bugs?

Bed bugs are small, wingless insects that feed on the blood of people while they sleep at night. Most often, the bites are not felt, but the person notices red, itchy bumps when they wake up. These insects hide in cracks and spaces in beds, furniture, and walls during the day.

Where do they come from?

Bed bugs are good hitchhikers and have been found in many public places including hotels, movie theatres, airplanes, taxi cabs, retail stores, and college dorms. Increasing travel, global trade, and pesticide resistance have allowed bed bug populations to grow in recent years.

How can I prevent bringing bed bugs home?

- Be alert when you travel. Check your hotel room for bed bugs and keep your luggage on a luggage rack. Vacuum your luggage upon return and put all clothes through the dryer for at least 20 minutes.
- Avoid bed bug materials. Do not bring discarded furniture or mattresses into your home.
- Remove clutter and vacuum your home. Clutter may allow bed bugs to go unnoticed for a longer time and make it much harder to treat.

What should I do if I find bed bugs?

If you believe you have bed bugs in your home, you should contact your landlord or a pest control company immediately. Try to collect a sample of any bed bugs you find. This will help the pest control company when doing the home inspection. The Alexandria Health Department is also available to identify samples, or answer any questions you might have.

Could there be bed bugs at my child's school?

Bed bugs can be brought into the school accidentally but it is hard for bed bugs to survive in the school for very long. Alexandria schools work with the Health Department whenever a bed bug is found. If you find a bed bug on your child's belongings you should notify the school so that appropriate actions can be taken.

What can I do to make sure my child does not bring bed bugs to school?

If you have bed bugs in your home, it is not necessary to keep your child home from school. Take the following steps to help prevent bed bugs from spreading outside the home.

- After clothes have gone through a hot wash and dry, keep them sealed in plastic bags or plastic storage boxes until they are worn.
- Send only necessary items to school.
- Inspect backpacks, lunch boxes, and coats before the child goes to school and after they return home.
- Keep these items in a sealed plastic bag or plastic storage box when your child comes home from school.



For more information about bed bugs, please visit the Alexandria Health Department's website at www.alexandriava.gov/bedbugs or call (703) 746-4910.