

Bed bugs

Brown Health Services Patient Education Series

What are Bed bugs?

Bed bugs are tiny bugs that do not fly. They are found all over the world, and can live in hotels, houses, hostels, and other places people rest and sleep. They can live in your mattress, clothes, bedding, walls and other parts of your home. Most often they bite while you are sleeping. If you have Bed bugs in your home you may not be able to see them as they are very small and hide during the day. Bed bugs do not spread disease in people. Bed bugs are different insects than both fleas and lice. Treatments used for the various forms of lice do not work on Bed bugs.

What do Bed bug bites look like?

Bed bug bites are:

- small, red and swollen areas of the skin that are often in a row or line
- on parts of the body not covered by clothes- such as the neck, face, arms, and hands
- bites are very itchy
- usually not felt as they are biting
- bites often noticed in the morning or a day or two later, commonly on exposed skin areas not covered by clothing you sleep in

Bed bug bites can take 3-6 weeks to heal, and can get infected if you scratch them a lot.

Is there a way to tell if I have Bed bug bites?

There is no test to tell if you have Bed bug bites but your provider may suspect your bites are from Bed bugs when inspecting your skin.

What can be done to help heal Bed bug bites?

- keep skin clean and dry
- do not scratch the bites
- over the counter non-sedating antihistamine taken orally for itching
- applying topical cortisone cream directly to bites

How do I get rid of Bed bugs?

- Vacuum your home
- Wash clothes and bedding in hot water
- Dry laundry in a dryer on the hottest setting
- Pest control service may be required to inspect for and/or treat for Bed bugs, sometimes using chemical insecticides
- On campus, contact the Residential Life department if you suspect bed bug infestation
- Make an appointment with Health Services for an assessment of possible bites

Follow up with your provider if skin lesions [bites] become more swollen, painful or you notice pus.