

General “Need to Know” Information about Bed Bugs

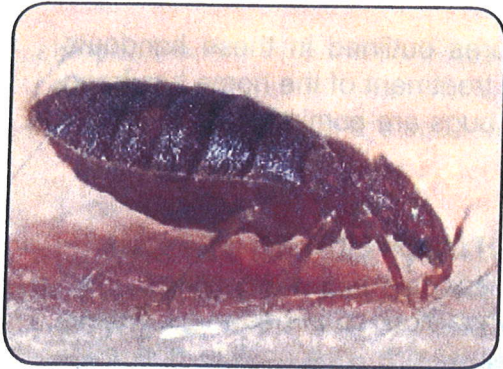
- Bed bugs are small, brownish, flattened insects that feed on the blood of people while they sleep. Although the bite does not hurt at the time, it may develop into an itchy welt similar to a mosquito bite.
- Bed bugs **DO NOT** transmit disease according to the C.D.C.
- Bed bugs will hide during the day, usually, only coming out at night to feed. However, they can hitchhike from one place to another in backpacks, clothing, luggage, books, and other items, making the school a potential hub for bed bug spread. This is **not** a minor concern – bed bugs are very expensive and difficult to eradicate.
- If a bed bug infestation is suspected or live insects are found on a student or in personal belongings, the teacher/person in charge should contact the school district IPM coordinator at once and explain in detail what they have found. That will end the teacher’s responsibility. The school should then contact a **licensed pest management professional** for assistance.
- The use of pesticides to control pests indoors is regulated by **Kentucky law**. An integrated pest management program (IPM) plan must be in place.
- Bed bugs require considerable professional expertise, and **significant client cooperation**.
- Our local schools are not immune to the worldwide growth of what experts label “a nuisance that can cause panic driven” reactions. This is why a protocol should be immediately carried out in the event a bed bug is sighted and properly identified.

A guide to

bed bugs what schools should know



Recently, Kentucky has seen an increased number of bed bug infestations affecting residents. As bed bugs infest more and more homes, they may find their way into schools. When this happens, schools should be proactive to help prevent the infestation and spreading of bed bugs in the school setting.



what are bed bugs?

Bed bugs are small, brownish, flattened insects that feed on the blood of people while they sleep. Although the bite does not hurt at the time, it may develop into an itchy welt similar to a mosquito bite. Bed bugs do not transmit disease, but they can cause significant itchiness, anxiety and sleeplessness.

Bed bug infestations are difficult and expensive to control.

Usually, bed bugs will hide during the day and only come out to feed during the night. Unlike head lice, they do not live on a person. However, they can hitchhike from one place to another in backpacks, clothing, books and other items.



are infestations in classrooms common?

Actual bed bug infestations in schools are uncommon. More commonly, a few bed bugs will hitchhike to school from an infested home by hiding in a student's clothing or backpack. Bed bugs that hitch a ride into the school in one student's backpack could be carried home by another student, making the school a potential hub for bed bug spread. Bed bugs are very expensive and difficult to eradicate.

School staff should be alert and report any suspected bed bug findings in a school to the school nurse or principal. DO NOT treat classrooms with any chemicals. Using any unapproved chemicals could be dangerous. Risk Management, in conjunction with the school's pest management professional, will determine if there is a need for classroom treatment and make necessary arrangements if needed.



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www.lexingtonhealthdepartment.org

working with parents/caregivers

what to do when there is a bed bug infestation at home

When a student is dealing with an infestation at home, be sensitive to the problem. Although bed bugs have nothing to do with cleanliness or socioeconomic status, there is a stigma that can come with having bed bugs. Parents may be hesitant to admit to having bed bugs; students may not want others to know of the problem (they may also feel anxious or tired during the school day).

Schools should work with the parents of any student living in an infested home to develop strategies for preventing the further spread of bed bugs.



the health department is here

Families can contact the Lexington-Fayette County Health Department to request a bed bug inspection, or for guidance on how to proceed with prevention/treatment. However, LFCHD does not provide pest control services or financial aid for treatment.

prevent the spread

In an infested home, parents should store their child's freshly laundered clothing in sealed plastic bags until they are put on in the morning. This prevents bed bugs from hiding in the clothing and being carried to school.

inspect, inspect, inspect

Backpacks, lunchboxes, and other items that travel back and forth to school can be inspected daily and stored in sealed plastic containers at home to prevent bed bugs from spreading.

At school, the student could be provided with plastic bags or bins in which to store their belongings in order to prevent any bed bugs from spreading to other students' belongings.

notify

If bed bugs are finding their way into school, notify your school nurse or principal.

Use the measures outlined in these handouts until successful treatment of the home has been verified and no bugs are coming into the school building.

laws and property treatment

Landlords and apartment owners should treat their premise when notified of bed bugs. During treatment, tenants are responsible for their belongings (including furniture, mattresses, clothing, etc.).

Contact Us

Lexington-Fayette County
Health Department

Environmental Health and Protection
(859) 252-2371

Office of School Health
(859) 288-2314

Other resources:

www.lexingtonhealthdepartment.org
www.cdc.gov/bedbugs
www.michigan.gov/bedbugs

☐ **Perform a visual screening**

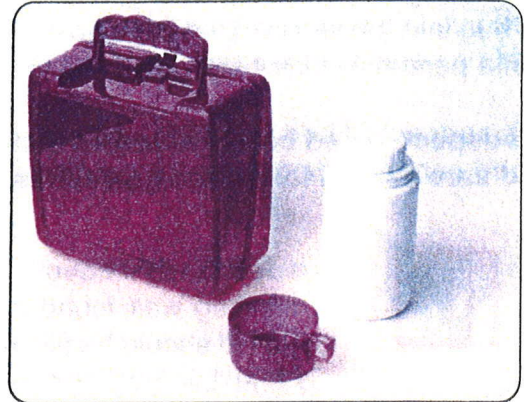
Designated school personnel should perform a visual screening of the student's outer clothing upon returning to school. If any bugs are seen, the student should be asked to change into clothing provided by the school; the student's clothing should be placed in a zip lock bag and sent home with the student at the end of the school day (or can be washed and dried at the school for use the following day).

☐ **Preserve emotional and physical health**

Keep the identity of the involved student and classroom in confidence to preserve the student's emotional and physical health during identification and remediation.

☐ **Providing additional information**

A letter may be sent home to the parents of children in the classroom/school based on severity of the situation to alert them of the finding and to provide information for parents who suspect they may have bed bugs in their home. This should be determined by the FCPS administration on a case-by-case basis.



☐ **Emphasize sanitation procedures**

For children/students repeatedly coming to school with bed bugs, institute clothing and school item sanitation:

- ☐ In an infested home, parents should store their child's freshly laundered clothing in sealed plastic bags until they are put on in the morning. Backpacks, lunchboxes and other items that travel back and forth to school can also be inspected daily and stored in sealed plastic containers.
- ☐ At school, the student can be provided with plastic bags or bins to store their belongings and prevent bed bugs from spreading to other students' belongings. Please keep their emotional health and privacy in mind while instituting these procedures.

☐ **Extend investigation (if needed)**

If a child repeatedly reports to school showing evidence of bed bugs despite previous notification, education and counseling with parents, further investigation is needed. Repeated bed bug presence may be due to the following:

Inability of parents/caregivers to recognize the scope of an infestation at home.

Failure to effectively treat a recognized infestation – due to pest management failure, landlord/tenant dispute, lack of financial resources, repeated re-infestation from outside of home (places a student sleeps or visits), non-vigilance or lack of concern on part of the parent.

Failure to adhere to recommended clothing and school item sanitation recommendations.

Need to investigate other sources of bed bugs on school property such as lockers, buses, common areas or other areas students routinely congregate.