

Bed Bugs

Education.
Prevention.
Remediation.

A Worldwide Problem

Bed bugs are a growing problem due to increased global travel and decreased use of pesticides. Bed bugs have been found in five-star hotels, college residences, hospitals, and virtually all other types of housing throughout the United States. Given the nearly 13,600 students and family members and over 8,000 summer visitors who live in UC San Diego residences each year, we are fortunate to have experienced relatively few bed bug cases.

How do you spot them?

Bed bugs have six legs. Adult bed bugs have flat bodies about 1/4 of an inch in length. Their color can vary from red and brown to copper colored. Young bed bugs are very small. Their bodies are about 1/16 of an inch in length. They have almost no color. When a bed bug feeds, its body swells, and it may lengthen and become bright red, sometimes making it appear to be a different insect. Bed bugs do not fly; they either crawl or are carried from place to place on objects, people, or animals. Bed bugs can be hard to find and identify because they are tiny and try to stay hidden.

An average bed bug lives for about 10 months. Female bed bugs lay one to five eggs per day. Bed bugs grow to full adulthood in about 21 days. Bed bugs can survive for months without feeding. Because bed bugs usually feed at night, most people are bitten in their sleep and do not realize they were bitten. A person's reaction to insect bites is an immune response and so varies from person to person. Sometimes the red welts caused by the bites will not be noticed until many days after a person was bitten, if at all.

Common signs and symptoms of a possible bed bug infestation:

- Small red to reddish brown fecal spots on mattresses, box springs, bed frames, linens, upholstery, or walls.
- Molted bed bug skins, white, sticky eggs, or empty eggshells.
- Very heavily infested areas may have a characteristically sweet odor.
- Red, itchy bite marks, especially on the legs, arms and other body parts exposed while sleeping. However, some people do not show bed bug lesions on their bodies even though bed bugs may have fed on them.

How do bed bugs get to campus?

While bed bugs are generally not carried on your person, they can be transported in personal possessions such as bedding, suitcases, backpacks, boxes, and furniture. We typically see an increase in reported cases when students return from winter and spring breaks.

What can you do to help?

Learn to identify bed bugs, inspect your belongings, your bed and your backpack periodically and don't bring second-hand furniture items onto campus. When returning to campus, don't put suitcases on or under the bed. These measures will help prevent bed bug infestations.

How does UC San Diego respond to bed bug occurrences?

UC San Diego takes bed bug discoveries very seriously and has implemented a comprehensive pest management program to deal with cases when they are brought to our attention. Our experienced Environment, Health & Safety (EH&S) Pest Management team is licensed and trained to identify and eradicate bed bugs. When a case is confirmed, Pest Management immediately initiates the treatment process, allowing us to manage bed bugs and prevent their reappearance. Our priority is to create a bed bug-free environment as soon as possible. UC San Diego is engaged in ongoing measures to contain current cases and prevent future cases. These include educational materials for students and guests, staff training, and partnerships with Health Services and EH&S.

What do you do if you suspect bed bugs?

If bed bugs are suspected, tenants should immediately notify Environment Health & Safety Pest Management at ehspest@ucsd.edu or 858.534.4534, as well as contact their Housing office. Once notified, Pest Management will schedule and conduct an inspection. Tenants shall cooperate with the inspection to facilitate the detection and treatment of bed bugs. Upon completion of the inspection, Pest Management will notify the tenant and the Housing office of the findings.

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