

Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services Risk Management

Subject: Bed Bugs



What is it?

Bed bugs are small insects that feed on the blood of mammals and birds. Adult bed bugs are oval, wingless and rusty red colored, and have flat bodies, antennae and small eyes. They are visible to the naked eye, but often hide in cracks and crevices. When bed bugs feed, their bodies swell and become a brighter red. In homes, bed bugs feed primarily on the blood of humans, usually at night when people are sleeping.

What risk does it present?

Once unheard of in the United States, increased infestation is thought to be the consequence of increased international travel. In most cases, bed bugs are transported from infested areas to non-infested areas when they cling onto someone's clothing, or crawl into luggage, furniture or bedding that is then brought into homes. Although bed bugs may be a nuisance to people, they are not known to spread disease. They are known to cause allergic reactions from their saliva in sensitive people. The typical life span of a bed bug is about 10 months. They can survive for weeks to months without feeding.

How is it managed?

- Immediate consultation with a licensed, professional pest control company is required
- It is the expectation of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) that an infestation of bed bugs is managed in the individual's environment(s) with as little disruption as possible to their routine.

Where and to whom do these recommendations and protocols apply?

- This protocol applies to any individual supported by the Department of Developmental Services whose housing environment is infested
- Information regarding the individual's status relative to this issue is to be handled in the same manner as any medical information according to HIPAA regulations.
- The DDS Area Office Nurse should be made immediately aware of this condition in a home.

Where can I find additional help?

- CDC – www.cdc.gov
- DPH – www.mass.gov/dph