

### **WHAT ARE BED BUGS?**



Bed bugs are insects that feed on human blood. They are normally found in or near sleeping areas. Bed bugs are nocturnal and generally are not seen during the day. The insects hide in cracks and crevices such as in the seams of mattresses, behind baseboards and pictures, and under furniture. They also can hide on upholstered furniture such as couches and chairs. Bed bugs are effective hitchhikers, and they can be transported from location to location by traveling in luggage, new and used furniture, and on an individual's clothing. In most instances bed bug bites cause an allergic reaction similar to mosquito bites. In some cases individuals have developed secondary infections from scratching the bites, but as of now bed bugs have not been proven to spread disease.

### **HOW CAN HOME VISITORS PROTECT THEMSELVES AGAINST BED BUGS?**

Home visitors serving clients who are living in homes infested with bed bugs face a risk of transporting the insects with them and infesting their homes, offices, and cars. Home visitors should follow these steps in order to protect themselves:

- Know what bed bugs look like and know the signs of an infestation.
  - If you notice bed bugs or signs of infestation notify the occupant.
- You may want to wear protective shoe coverings before entering the home.
  - If you do, remove the coverings immediately after exiting the home, place them in a tightly sealed bag, and place the bag in an outdoor trash receptacle.
- Limit the amount of items you take into the home and do not place them on a bed or any type of upholstered furniture. Place them on countertops or other hard surfaces.
- Do not take cloth bags or suitcases into the home. Try to use clear plastic totes instead.
- Do not sit on any upholstered furniture. If possible sit on a hard surface chair, such as a wooden dining room chair.
- Increase the amount of light in the home during your visit by opening window blinds and turning on lights.
- Try not to wear pants with cuffs.
- Perform a self inspection when returning to your vehicle. Be sure to conduct the inspection before entering your vehicle.
- If you find evidence of bed bugs, place the items you took into the residence into a tightly sealed bag. When possible change your clothes and place them in a tightly sealed bag. Wash the clothes in hot water and dry them on high heat to kill any bed bugs and their eggs.



For more information on bed bugs feel free to call the Licking County Health Department at 740-349-6535 or visit [www.lickingcohealth.org](http://www.lickingcohealth.org)