



# Bedbugs

## PATIENT EDUCATION SERIES

### **What are bedbugs?**

Bedbugs 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 bedbugs in your home you may not be able to see them as they are very small and hide during the day. Bedbugs do not spread disease in people. Bedbugs are different insects than both fleas, and lice. Treatments used for the various forms of lice do not work on bedbugs.

### **What do bedbug bites look like?**

Bedbug 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. Bedbug bites are very itchy. Most people don't feel the bites as they are getting bitten, rather they notice the bites in the morning a day or two later. Bedbug 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 bedbug bites?**

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

### **What can be done to help heal bedbug bites?**

Keep skin clean and dry, and do not scratch the bites. An over the counter non-sedating antihistamine may help with the itching, applying topical cortisone cream directly to bites may help as well.

### **How do I get rid of bedbugs?**

Vacuum your home, wash clothes and bedding in hot water, then dry them in a dryer on the hottest setting. Sometimes a pest control service may be required to inspect for and/or treat for bedbugs, sometimes using chemical insecticides. On campus, contact Residential Life department if you suspect bedbug infestation, and make an appointment with Health Services for an assessment of possible bites.