



BEWARE OF BED BUGS



What Are Bed Bugs?

- Bed Bugs are nocturnal parasites that feed on the blood of humans and animals.
- Infestations are on the rise throughout North America, including DeKalb, Illinois.
- They hide in cracks and crevices by day, and feed on human blood by night.
 - o The good news is that this insect is not known to transmit human disease.
- During the day, bed bugs hide in mattresses, box springs, bed frames, nightstands, curtains, couches, and wall voids, behind baseboards, carpet edges, door and window frames, picture frames, peeling paint & wallpaper.
 - o It is a myth that only unclean apartments are at risk for bed bug infestation. Even a clean apartment can become infested because bed bugs have the ability to travel.
- **Landlords are required to disclose all building code violations to prospective tenants, so be sure to ask potential landlords whether their properties have any problems with bed bugs, and if so, what steps are being done to address the issue.**
 - o **DO NOT SIGN A LEASE WITHOUT FIRST ASKING THE LANDLORD WHETHER THERE HAVE BEEN ANY COMPLAINTS REGARDING BED BUGS AT THIS PROPERTY**

How To Identify Bed Bugs:

- Bed Bugs are difficult to identify because they are wingless & very small (about ¼ inch long). Most people don't realize they have been bitten by a bed bug until the body reacts with inflammation and swelling around the bite, along with intense itching.
 - o Look for bed bugs under folds in mattresses, along seams and in between bedposts and bed slats. Other places to look for bed bugs during the day include behind baseboards, in night stands, inside pillow cases and inside any piece of furniture that is located adjacent to the bed.
 - Checking your bed linen in the middle of the night gives you the best chance to find bed bugs on the move.

What To Do When Infested:

- Do not ignore the presence of bed bugs because they will NOT go away on their own.
- First, **notify your landlord of the problem**. Ask whether they have a contract with a licensed pest control manager, ask for details of the plan to remedy the bed bug problem, and offer your cooperation (including making your apartment available to exterminators).
 - o Also, insist that the landlord inspect ceilings and floors as well as adjoining apartments on the same floor, since bed bugs may spread through cracks and holes in the walls.
- If your landlord fails to remedy the bed bug problem, your next step should be to call the **City of Dekalb Building Code Enforcement Division → 815-748-2070**
 - o Schedule a time for the City to inspect your apartment. A bed bug infestation violates the local building code.
- If all else fails, contact the **Northern Illinois University Students' Legal Assistance Office** and schedule an appointment with an attorney → **815-753-1701**
 - o Visit "<http://www.niu.edu/legal>" for more information & links regarding bed bugs.

(Prepared By: Northern Illinois University Students' Legal Assistance)