

Spring Break Travel and Bed Bugs: An Advisory from Housing Pest Control

During the past 2 to 3 years, the instances of bed bug infestations have increased at an alarming rate at motels and hotels around the world. Instances of bed bug infestations have been reported at major hotels in areas such as Chicago. **At this time, there have been no instances of bed bug infestations in UF residence halls.** We'd like to keep that record by providing information to help you avoid bed bug infestations at motels/hotels during your Spring Break travels.

A bed bug is an insect with piercing-sucking mouthparts. It can bite and suck the blood out like a mosquito. It is oval and flat and is about 1/4 to 5/8 inches long. Bed bugs most often feed on people at night while they are asleep in their beds. Their bites leave small white to red welts, and the bites itch intensely. Bites are not localized to any one area of the body.

The cleanliness of the motel/hotel is not always a true indication of whether there might be a problem. The guest that stayed the night before you in the room may have left an unwanted surprise. Bed bugs arrive in this country from overseas most often in the luggage and clothing of guests. They are then transported from motels/hotels to other locations -- like your home or residence hall space.

To avoid bringing bed bugs back with you from Spring break travel:

- Inspect the bed in your motel/hotel. Take the sheet and pull it back and look at the folds and seams of the mattress. Check the mattress pad for signs of blood spots about the size of a pencil point.
- When packing to leave, check your clothing and luggage for signs of the small insects.
- If you get bitten while staying in a motel/hotel, look very carefully around the mattress and bed to try to determine if it is bed bugs. Report the situation to motel/hotel staff.
- Bed bugs can be killed by heat over 111 degrees and cold below 32 degrees. If you discover bed bugs in your clothing or linen, wash them in hot water or place them in a bag in a freezer.

If you take care to check out the areas where you stay and check your luggage before coming home or back to the residence halls, you will significantly reduce the chances of bed bug infestation.

If you have questions about this info, email: houinfo@housing.ufl.edu and your questions will be forwarded to the Housing and Residence Education pest control professionals.

If you have pest control concerns in your room, fill out a HAWK request:
www.housing.ufl.edu