Bed Bugs

Properly identifying bed bugs:

- Adult bed bugs are flat with rusty-red-colored oval bodies, and are about 3/16" long or the size of an apple seed.
- A newly hatched bed bug is semi-transparent, light tan in color, and cracks in furniture, and baseboards of walls for blood stains, about 3/16" long or the size of an apple seed.
- Inspect mattress seams, sheets, upholstered furniture, crevices and cracks in furniture, and baseboards of walls for blood stains, droppings and eggs.
- For help in positively identifying bed bugs, contact the ISU Linn County Extension office at 319-377-9839.

Things you can do to prevent bed bugs:

- Never bring bed frames, mattresses, box springs or upholstered furniture found on the street into your home.
- Check all used or rented furniture for bed bugs.
- Inspect the bed and furniture when traveling. Keep suitcases off the floor and bed, and inspect them before you leave.
- If you suspect you have been around bed bugs, immediately wash and dry your clothing on hot settings or store it in a sealed plastic bag until you can.

Getting rid of bed bugs:

- Bed bug infestations usually require the services of professional exterminators.
- Severe infestations or cluttered apartments may take more visits to eliminate bed bugs.

What you can do without a professional:

- Get rid of clutter in sleeping areas. Clutter gives bed bugs a place to hide.
- Wash all items in hot water (130°F) and dry on the highest setting for at least 20 minutes. For items that can’t be washed, 20 minutes in a HOT clothes dryer will kill bed bugs. Steam heat is also effective against bed bugs and bed bug eggs.
- Enclose infested mattresses and box springs in a cover that is labeled “for bed bugs” for at least a full year. Even if there are bed bugs (eggs, etc) still on the mattress, an effective cover will cause them to starve and die.
- Monitor for bed bugs by placing double-sided tape around the legs of your bed and in other areas. This won’t stop all bed bugs.

About the use of pesticides:

Bed bug infestations usually require the use of pesticides.

- It is not advisable for homeowners or tenants to attempt to treat for bed bugs. Most of the necessary pesticides are only sold for use by professional pest management companies.
- Chemical treatments used for other pests will NOT be effective against bed bugs and will only cause unnecessary chemical exposure to the person applying the treatment.

Additional Resources:

- www.idph.state.iu.us
- www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm
- www.cdc.gov
- www.epa.gov
- www.linncounty.org

ALWAYS FOLLOW THE PESTICIDE LABEL!