

Spring breakers should keep an eye out for bed bugs during travels

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(PhysOrg.com) -- During the past three to four 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 and New York.

"There really isn't much you can do to prevent them except for be on the look out and try to avoid them," assistant director of Penn State Housing and bed bug guru Dave Manos said. "There has been a resurgence of bed bugs in this country and no matter where you go, you should check. It doesn't matter if it's a 5-star hotel."

Surprising to many, bed bugs are visible. They can grow to be the size of a pencil eraser. They also bite and can cause a rash similar to mosquito bites. However, bed bugs are not known to spread disease and there are no health implications, except for possible allergic reactions.

The cleanliness of the hotel is not always a true indication of whether there might be a problem. The guest that stayed the night before could easily start the infestation. Bed bugs arrive in this country from overseas most often in the luggage and clothing of guests. They are then transported from hotels to other locations, like homes or residence halls.

"It is not an issue of being dirty," Penn State Housing director Conal Carr said. "It is an issue and a big part of it is letting people know what to look out for."

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.

Provided by Penn State

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