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Don't let the bed bugs bite

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Many people think "don't let the bed bugs bite" is just an expression, but these days, bed bugs are becoming an increasingly big problem within residences of all kinds throughout the country. Once thought to be eradicated in the United States, bed bugs have recently come back with a vengeance.

Cimex lectularius, the most common bed bug, hides well, spreads easily, reproduces quickly and is difficult to treat. It is important to be proactive in both the prevention and treatment of bed bugs.

These critters are challenging pests to control. They hide in many tiny places, so inspections and treatments must be very thorough. In most cases, it would be prudent to enlist the services of a professional pest control firm. Experienced companies know where to look for bed bugs and have an assortment of management tools at their disposal. Owners, managers and residents will need to assist the professional in various ways. Affording access for inspection and treatment is essential, and excess clutter should be removed. In some cases, infested mattresses and box springs will need to be discarded. Since bed bugs can disperse throughout a building, it also may be necessary to inspect adjoining rooms and apartments.

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." There are many things that can be done to prevent bed bugs. Assigning responsibility to staff members for performing inspections and educating existing residents is crucial. Having a written plan in place by way of developing protocols for existing residents and for moving in new residents will go a long way towards reducing infestations. The potential cost to owners for not preventing and removing bed bugs can be substantial. An increasing number of insurers are writing exclusionary language with regard to insects, leaving owners holding the bag for payment of pest control treatments, discarded clothing and furniture, as well as medical and stress claims resulting from bed bug bites.

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