



PREVENT. PROMOTE. PROTECT.

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## NEWS

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### **Don't Bring Unwanted Guests Home**

#### **From Holiday Travel**

**Hamilton County, Ohio**..... They are certainly an issue in Hamilton County, but we are by no means alone when it comes to bedbug infestations. As many people hit the road to enjoy holidays with friends and family, it's important to take precautions to avoid bringing these pesky hitchhikers back with us.

According to Hamilton County Public Health director of environmental services, Jeremy Hessel, local health departments can be a great source of information as you plan holiday travel. "Before you leave, you can call the local health department at your destination to inquire about recent bedbug activity where you'll be staying, especially if you're staying at a hotel or other public accommodation," he says. "When you arrive, ask the manager if they have had bedbug complaints."

Preventive practices are always a good idea when traveling. Leave all of your belongings in the hallway or in your vehicle when you first enter your room. Carefully inspect your room, looking closely at:

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- Mattresses and box springs
- Bed frames
- Dressers
- Headboards, including screw holes where headboards are attached
- Baseboards and wall junctures
- Sheets and pillows
- Chairs and couches (including zippers, cushions and frames)
- Closets and armoires.

Bedbug infestation will usually be evidenced by fecal deposits and stains on walls and furniture; exoskeletons of the bugs on furniture or flooring; and/or bites on your body. If you observe signs of bedbugs in your room, ask for a different room or find another accommodation. “If you find signs of bedbugs, you would be doing others a big favor by reporting your findings to the local health department,” Hessel says.

If no bedbugs are observed, it is still a good idea to follow these recommendations when staying in public facilities:

- Hang all clothing in closets.
- Do not leave your belongings on the floor.
- Do not use the dresser drawers in your room.
- If possible, pack clothing and belongings in sealed plastic bags.

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As you leave the facility, have another look at your luggage and belongings prior to putting them in your car or bringing them into your home. If bedbugs are observed:

- Place all luggage and belongings into a sealed trash bag.
- Launder your clothing with your usual washing and drying process.
- Vacuum all bedbugs off of luggage and personal items while outside of your home and vehicle.

“Holidays can be stressful enough without unexpected guests,” Hessel says. “Visit us at [www.hamiltoncountyhealth.org](http://www.hamiltoncountyhealth.org) for the most up-to-date treatment and preventive advice.”

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