Bed Bug Fact Sheet

1. Bed bugs are expert hiders and not everyone in your family may be allergic to the bites. If you suspect an infestation, your county board of health (in Hendricks County, the number is 745-9217) can come to your home and do an inspection. If bed bugs are found, they can provide information on how to rid your home of the bugs.
2. The most effective treatment for eradicating bed bugs is heat. Professional chemical treatments are the next best option. Indeed, it is nearly impossible to effectively treat bed bugs without professional help. The treatment can cost upwards of $1000 or an average of $1 per square foot. There are a number of avenues available to help pay for treatment.
   1. Often, township trustees will agree to help pay for treatment (in Hendricks Country, call 272-1835)
   2. Community Partners will help pay for treatment if funds are available (in Hendricks Country, call 745-6496)
   3. If you have a local branch of Partners in Care (in Hendricks Country, call 745-6502), they have been known to help
   4. If the family has a church affiliation, often they will be willing to help
3. There are steps you can take to treat the problem on your own, especially if you catch it early. Keep in mind that bed bugs can remain dormant for up to 18 months, so diligence is key!
   1. Upholstered items and clothing can be wrapped in black plastic and set out in the sun for several hours, as the heat should kill bugs and eggs.
   2. Wash clothes and bedding in hot water and dry on high heat.
   3. Even dry clean only items, plush toys and most delicates can be put in the dryer on high heat for 30 minutes, which should kill them. To be safe, store these items in plastic bags for 3 weeks.
   4. Delicates that can’t be heated could also be put in the freezer for a day.
   5. Thoroughly vacuum and steam clean all carpets. Vacuum cleaner bags should immediately be placed in a plastic bag and put in the outside trash to prevent bugs from migrating back to the bedding.
   6. Remove all clutter (books, knick knacks, boxes, etc.) Items should be thrown away or stored for a full year in plastic containers.
   7. An allergy-rated mattress cover will kill existing bugs on a mattress but will not prevent further infestation.
   8. Infested box springs should be thrown away. Other items with heavy infestation, such as mattresses and couches should also be thrown away. St. Vincent-DePauw Distribution (in Hendricks Country, call 687-0169) will provide replacement furnishings and other household items to families in need.
   9. Store-bought pesticides can be used. Spray these on walls and large items, such as cabinets. Use only approved pesticides, read and follow all directions and take care when using such products around children and pets.