

Healthy Indoor Environments

Where We Live, Learn and Play

University of Georgia Family & Consumer Sciences • Volume 3 • Number 3 • September 2019



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Emergency Planning Resources

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GEMA
<https://gema.georgia.gov/>

FEMA
<https://www.fema.gov/>

UGA Extension
<https://extension.uga.edu/>

<https://www.fcs.uga.edu/extension/disasters>

Ready.gov
<https://www.ready.gov/>

Extension Disaster Education Network
<https://eden.lsu.edu/>

Prepare an Emergency “Grab and Go Bag”

Written by Becca Stackhouse, FACS Extension Agent, Crisp County

Have you ever thought about what you might need to take with you if you are evacuating your home in an emergency? Everyone needs a “grab and go” bag prepared for an emergency. This bag provides a simple way to organize and access supplies to get you and your family safely through the immediate emergency, or until other resources are located. Let’s dig into what you need to include in your bag.

- ◇ **Container.** You need a waterproof duffle bag, or an ordinary bag stored in an airtight container to protect it from moisture.
- ◇ **Water.** Include three gallons of drinking water per person and three gallons per pet. This should be enough water to last three days.
- ◇ **Food.** You need a 2–3 day supply of food for all people and pets. Choose non-perishable foods with high nutrient value. Check the expiration dates every six months and replace as needed.
- ◇ **First aid & medications.** Include general first aid items, such as bandages, antiseptic wipes, aspirin and non-aspirin pain relievers, gauze, scissors, antacid, and any other personal items. Include a place to put prescription medications immediately before evacuation.
- ◇ **Clothing.** Include at least one change of clothes including underwear and socks, closed-toed shoes, and coats and gloves for all people in the home. If you have children, check clothing sizes at least every 6 months, and replace with new clothes as children grow. Be sure to include diapers and wipes if you have children still in diapers.
- ◇ **Equipment.** Include a flashlight, extra batteries, a non-electric radio, and a phone charger.
- ◇ **Bedding.** Sleeping bags and blankets. Be sure to include blankets for pets if you have any in the home.
- ◇ **Personal hygiene products.** Include a roll of toilet paper, wet wipes, toothbrushes and toothpaste, and feminine hygiene items.
- ◇ **Mementos.** Include a reminder to collect special household items that are of importance to your family before you evacuate.
- ◇ **Cash** in small bills and coins.
- ◇ **Vital documents.** Include a folder with your home address, family members’ phone numbers, homeowners’ or renters’ insurance documents, medical insurance cards, and important medical records.
- ◇ **Entertainment.** Include age-appropriate books and games for each family member. If you are evacuating and have to stay in a shelter or other safe place, these items will keep family members busy.

Create a designated space for your grab and go bag, and be sure everyone knows where to find it. Review evacuation plans with the family regularly. Establish a designated family meeting point if you are separated. It’s hard to imagine that you might experience a disaster, but if you do, being prepared with a grab and go bag can help in tough circumstances.

Avoiding Bedbugs and Other Pests when Buying Secondhand Furniture

Written by Kathryn Holland, FACS Extension Agent, Colquitt County



Image Source: Pixabay

This is the perfect time to wander through thrift shops, antique malls and flea markets iced coffee in hand and friend at your side. It is a ripe opportunity to score the perfect secondhand or antique piece of furniture to fill a nook in your home or create an amazing DIY makeover project. Once you purchased your new treasure, there are a few things to consider before bringing it into your home, in particular those uninvited guests that may be lurking on it.

Pests are a legitimate concern in secondhand furniture, especially bedbugs and bore beetles along with your general ants, spiders, cockroaches, and other pests. How can you ensure that you do not become a landlord of a roach motel, and still enjoy your DIY home project? Here are a few tips to help you avoid bringing pests inside your home.

Bedbugs are about the width of a credit card and are great hitchhikers. They can squeeze into extremely small spaces such as the heads of screws and cracks. They travel home on furniture, luggage, bedding, small appliances, clothes, stuffed animals, and anything else you can imagine. They are primarily active at night and can travel up to 20 feet from their hiding place to feed.

How to spot bedbugs: Look for rusty or tarry spots about the size of an asterisk (*) [see picture] on bed sheets or furniture. Often adults and large nymphs will void remains of blood meals while still feeding.

How to avoid bedbugs on secondhand furniture: Furniture can be a paradise for bedbugs. Once inside, they can be impossible to detect. If the person donating or selling the furniture cleaned or vacuumed it without realizing bedbugs were present, the superficial signs and clues of bedbug activity may be absent, too. Steam Cleaning won't kill them. If you want to avoid them, look for items people don't sleep on or near – bugs usually stay near the host (and that's you). Inspect the furniture cracks, crevices, vents, joints, under loose paint and screw heads with a bright flashlight and magnifying glass for signs of bedbugs.



Close up of blood on a chair.
Photo courtesy: Harold Harlan
(epa.gov/bedbugs/how-find-bed-bugs)

Treatment for bedbugs: Consider heat treating your find in a dark plastic bag outside to be sure it doesn't harbor bedbugs or their eggs. Your target temperature is at least 110 degrees Fahrenheit for three hours or more. If that's not feasible given the item's size, place it in quarantine in an empty bathtub. Bed bugs can't escape up the slippery sides of tubs, so they'll be contained and easier to detect. Barring all other options, keep new furniture away from sleeping areas and inspect them over time for bedbug activity like spots, exoskeletons and eggs.



Avoiding Bedbugs and other Pests when Buying Secondhand Furniture (cont.)



Adult powderpost beetle
Source: UC Integrated Pest Management Program

Wood-boring Beetles damage wood furniture and can also cause structural damage to a building. The larvae feed on the wood and when they reach maturity they emerge from the wood.

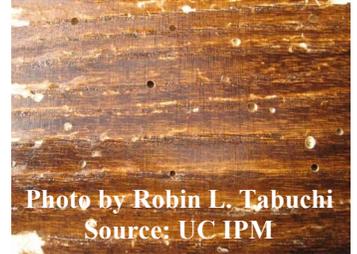


Photo by Robin L. Tabuchi
Source: UC IPM

How to spot beetles: Sometimes the only sign of these beetles is the small exit hole. The adult beetles lay eggs in unfinished surfaces, in cracks and openings. They prefer woods like oak, ash, hickory, mahogany, walnut and bamboo. Powderpost beetles leave behind small piles of a dust-like substance that is a mixture of feces and wood fragments.

How to avoid beetles on secondhand furniture: Like bedbugs, they are difficult to control after an infestation has started, so prevention is the golden rule. Avoid bringing items into your home that have signs of beetles. Inspect the furniture carefully, looking for small holes on the surface. If the tip of a pen fits into small holes on the surface of an item then it may have beetles. Use a bright flashlight and magnifying glass to inspect the item.

Treatment: for beetles You can heat small wooden items—but not those containing fabrics, pelts, or paints—in an oven at 120° to 140°F for 6 hours. You also can place items in a deep freezer at 0°F for 72 hours. Longer treatments might be necessary if the wood is thicker than 2 inches. Home freezers generally are not cold enough for kill beetles, so the oven method may be your best option.

Final thoughts for a safe DIY home project with secondhand furniture.

- ◇ Avoid buying mattresses and other items that may have been near a bed
- ◇ Choose un-upholstered furniture
- ◇ Look for signs of pests (chew marks, rodent nests, cobwebs, bore beetle holes, bug insect casings, droppings or frass) before you buy furniture.
- ◇ Inspect the item to see if it has been repaired multiple times, giving hiding places to pests
- ◇ If it smells bad, walk away. Cigarette smoke, mothballs, an oily smell (indication of roaches), animal urine, and other strong smells are challenging to eliminate.
- ◇ Know what you are looking for. Treat your shopping trip like an adventure and have FUN!

For more information:

University of California Integrated Pest Management Program (UC IPM)

Wood-boring beetles (<http://ipm.ucanr.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7418.html>)

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Bed Bugs (<https://www.epa.gov/bedbugs/how-find-bed-bugs>)

University of Georgia Extension

Bed Bugs (<https://www.fcs.uga.edu/docs/BedBugs.PDF>)



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Healthy Home Hacks

Recycling shortcut: Place a recycling basket and/or shredder next to where you sort mail. You can quickly deal with junk mail before it starts stacking up. ~ Pamela Turner

Computer keyboards are full of germs, dust, and maybe even food crumbs. Turn the keyboard over and shake the crumbs out then wipe it off with a damp rag or microfiber cloth. ~ Ines Beltran

Remove hard water stains from faucets by wrapping the faucet with a paper towel or cotton rag that has been dampened with distilled vinegar. Keep the wrap on for about one hour. Use an old toothbrush to scrub the hard-to-reach areas around the faucet. ~ Pamela Turner

Want to learn more about keeping children safe and healthy in child care?

Healthy Environments for Child Care Online Learning Modules

- Keep Me Lead Free!
- Injury Prevention and Control
- Water Safety and Quality
- Asthma
- *(More topics coming soon)*

bit.ly/HealthyEnvtsChildCareGA



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This newsletter is produced by UGA Extension and supported in part by the U.S Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture and the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Lead Hazard Control and Healthy Homes under the Healthy Homes Partnership Grant.

www.georgiahealthyhousing.org

