



#### A Letter to Campers Planning a Trip to Camp:

As you are aware, bed bugs have become a significant concern for everyone in Central Ohio in recent years. Recognizing this fact, Camp Oty'Okwa has engaged with the Central Ohio Bed Bug Task Force in order to be informed and trained on the latest information related to preventing and eliminating bed bugs from our camp. One result of this partnership has been the adoption of an intensive screening process for all baggage that enters the camp and for all the facilities that are used before every group's visit. While our screening is thorough, unfortunately we also know that there is no way to be 100% sure that a bed bug will not find its way into the camp.

As you plan your trip to Camp Oty'Okwa, we want you to be aware of the steps to take to prevent accidental introduction of insects into your home. Pests such as ticks, bed bugs, spiders, etc., can hitchhike on clothing and belongings. Though we maintain diligence to ensure bed bugs will not be part of the camp experience, we want you to be aware and take the following precautions for an outing such as camp, or any overnight stay away from home.

#### How to Pack:

1. Send camper's belongings in a soft bag that can be easily laundered upon their return home. Mesh laundry bags are preferred.
2. Pack any toiletries, especially liquids, in a sealable, plastic bag.

#### When Returning Home:

1. Leave all items outside. Seal items in plastic garbage bags until laundered.
2. Wipe down and inspect toiletry and other small items that cannot go in the washer or dryer.
3. Before bringing items in for laundering, you may want to shake items outside and then immediately put into the washer. Launder items, including luggage bag, in hot water (must be 120 degrees or higher) and dry on high heat in a dryer for at least 30 minutes after the items are dry. (Sensitive or wool items may be dried on high heat without being washed first.)
  - a. If you send items which cannot be laundered such as backpacks, suitcases, etc., these need to be vacuumed. Vacuum interior and exterior surfaces of these items. Be thorough. Luggage with wheels; be sure to vacuum the wheel areas and any inside and outside pockets as well.
  - b. When finished vacuuming, sprinkle about  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of talcum powder on the last section of items or on the floor to be vacuumed. Vacuum the powdered area. The talcum powder disperses into the vacuum bag to coat any insects or eggs which is abrasive to them and causes them to die. Remove the vacuum bag and place in a tightly sealed plastic garbage bag for disposal. NOTE: Do not use the same vacuum bag if moving on to another area.

To date, bed bugs have not been associated with the transmission of diseases, but are still a nuisance! According to the Central Ohio Bed Bug Task Force, bed bugs have been found in area homes, apartments, hotels, buses, offices, hospitals, schools, fire stations, etc. We urge you to become aware so as to prevent the accidental spread of bed bugs. If you believe that you have found bed bugs inside your home, call a licensed pest control company. There are many insects that resemble bed bugs that also leave similar allergic reactions. Once the bed bug has been identified, we do not suggest treating yourself, as this can make the problem worse. Only a licensed pest control company has the training to use chemicals or heat treatment properly. Bug bombs and foggers, sold at many retail stores, have been proven to make the problem worse, as this can cause the bed bugs to scatter. Knowledge is power when it comes to bed bugs. Be sure to go to the Central Ohio Bed Bug Task Force website at [www.centralohiobedbugs.org](http://www.centralohiobedbugs.org) to become more informed.

Unfortunately, the bed bug problem is increasing not just in Ohio but all over the United States. By each of us being alert and keeping up with our prevention efforts, accidental introduction of bed bugs into our homes and work places can be minimized. Of course, we hope that the camp's screening and education will prevent any chance that bed bugs will be a problem for you. However, it is better to be safe than sorry! And remember, these same precautions should be used whenever you have visited a public area (movie theatres, hospitals, airports etc.) where bed bugs find it easy to be at home. If you need additional information, please feel free to contact us, the Central Ohio Bed Bug Task Force or your local pest control company.

Thank you,

David Schirner  
Camp Director