Can bedbugs transmit diseases?

Since bedbugs are parasites that feed on human blood as well as feeding on blood of other mammals, asking ourselves whether bedbugs transmit diseases is only natural. After all, mosquitoes live off human blood and depending on the strain of mosquito; they transmit diseases such as malaria, encephalitis, and dengue fever. Fleas live off human blood as well as blood from other animals and they transmit bubonic plague. What's more, bedbugs do carry human viral and bacterial agents that can theoretically cause diseases. Bedbugs also carry protozoa and parasitic worms. In furtherance, bedbugs leave fecal droppings (spots) in areas they occupy. This includes mattresses, sheets, blankets, and could even include people's pajamas or body parts bed bugs crawl on.

Typically, bedbug germs are found in bedbug saliva and around bedbug mouthparts. Bedbugs insert these germy mouthparts into victims while biting or stinging them. Unlike mosquitoes and fleas that possess only one biting part, bedbugs have two biting parts. Both biting mouthparts are tubular or needle-like in appearance. When bedbug parasites feed, they insert both tubes through their victims' skin. One tube releases a numbing agent and an anti blood-clotting agent. The other tube sucks up blood. Insertion of two separate tubes through people's skin each time bedbugs take blood feedings implies bedbugs have twice the opportunity compared to other insects, to spread diseases each time they suck human blood.

The good news is, there is no evidence suggesting bedbug bites, bedbug feces, or disease-causing agents found within or upon bedbugs transmit diseases to humans. Therefore, although bedbugs may carry disease, odds are against humans catching diseases from bedbugs.

Reasons bedbugs do not seem to transmit diseases are that the twenty-seven or more disease-producing agents bedbugs carry do not survive long enough inside bedbugs to enable them to reproduce or to multiply. Likewise, neither disease-causing agents found about bedbug body parts nor bedbug droppings appear to have human impact.

With the above said, however, there are adversaries who believe diseases like Q-fever, leprosy, brucellosis, and oriental sores were contracted by humans during past bedbug exposures. However, these episodes lacked sufficient documentation to prove accuracy one way or the other; and thus there were no adverse findings.

Another theory, put out about a century ago by Doctor Charles Campbell of San Antonio, Texas, and released in a docket at the Environmental Protection Agency by commenter Susan Pearce of the Wyoming Vaccine Information Network, suggests bedbugs in the past, may have been sources of smallpox disease. No adverse conclusions have resulted from this case either.

Although humans may not need to concern themselves with contracting conditions other than itching and swelling from bedbug bites, there remains the possibility that some individuals may enter anaphylactic shock resulting from said bites. In addition, persons who become regular bedbug victims run the risk of becoming anemic due to their continual loss of blood. Anemia resulting from constant bedbug biting is mostly associated with undernourished children.

It is a good idea to learn all you can about bedbugs. In the mean time, at least you know that with all the itching bedbugs can create, at least the potential for shock is low and we do not need to concern ourselves worrying whether or not bed bugs (bedbugs) carry diseases or if we can catch disease from bedbugs.