



THE KISSING BUG: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

What does a kissing bug look like?

The kissing bug (*Triatoma sanguisuga*) that lives in Arkansas is dark brown or black, with orange-red to yellowish horizontal markings on its sides. The bug is usually one-half inch to 1-inch long.



I heard the kissing bug carries a disease. Is this true?

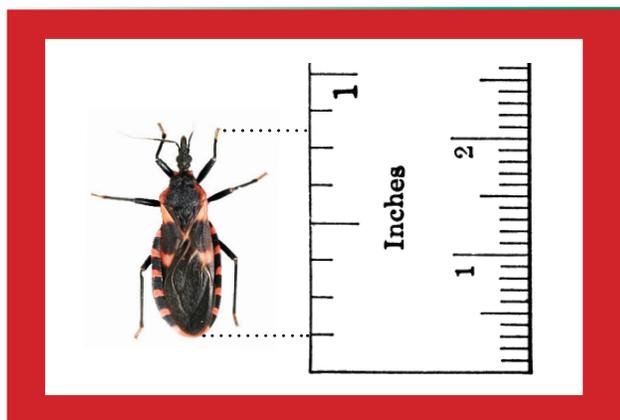
Yes. The kissing bug can carry a parasite that causes a disease called Chagas. However, Chagas is rarely found in Arkansas.

Chagas is much more common in Mexico, Central America, and South America.

How does the kissing bug spread Chagas?

Chagas is spread through the kissing bug's poop. In order for someone to get infected, the bug's poop must get into a cut in the skin or a small wound, such as a bite. The kissing bug can bite, so don't pick it up or touch it.

Chagas cannot be spread by touching or kissing a person who has the disease.



How likely am I to get Chagas from the kissing bug?

In Arkansas it is unlikely that you will get Chagas from the kissing bug. However, you should be aware that the bug can carry the disease and take steps to keep the bug out of your home and avoid being bitten by the bug.

What can I do to keep the kissing bug out of my house?

Having good screens on your windows and good seals around your doors is the best way to keep the bug out of your home. If you have pets that come in and out of your home, be sure to check them for any bugs that might have hitchhiked in. If you see the bug, don't handle it with bare hands.

What should I do if I think I have Chagas?

- See a doctor and tell them your concerns
- Your doctor may test your blood

Public health control strategies are focused on:

- Preventing kissing bugs from entering homes
- Screening blood products and organ transplants

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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1-800-462-0599

Visit our website at: www.healthy.arkansas.gov
Or go to the CDC's website at: www.cdc.gov