

Colorado State University

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOL NURSES, TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS ON BED BUGS

Each school district should develop a policy for when a bed bug is found. It is critical to decide how to respond to a single bed bug found on a child's clothing versus how to respond to one or more bed bugs loose in a classroom. Communicate this policy to all faculty and staff.

There is no need to close schools. Do not exclude students from school due to bed bugs unless repeated efforts have been made to remedy an infestation. Bed bugs are not known to vector pathogens or spread disease.

If a suspected bed bug is found on a student or their belongings:

1. Discreetly remove the child from the classroom so that the school nurse or other school-designated individual can examine — according to approved procedures — the student's clothing and other belongings. If a bed bug is found on a student, it may indicate that the student has bed bugs at home. However, bed bugs can crawl onto or off a person (or their belongings) at any time, so it also is possible that someone else brought the bed bug to school.
2. Any bugs found should be removed and collected for identification. Collect the specimen(s) carefully, trying not to crush the bugs. Proper identification requires that body parts remain intact and it is often useful to send multiple samples if available.
3. Send specimens to an experienced entomologist, at the school district, pest control company, or university, for identification. One source is the Plant/Insect ID and Diagnostic Clinic, E-215 Plant Sciences Building, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO 80523-1177 (phone 970-491-6950). Please do not send live specimens via any postal or shipping service as insects can escape during shipment. (Killed bed bugs can be sent under clear tape on a card and placed in a regular envelope.) Once received, an entomologist will examine the specimen and then notify the school designee of the bug's identification. Please provide a name, email and phone number for contact information.
4. If a confirmed bed bug is found, and the school has a dryer, have the child change into temporary clothing and place all of their clothes (including shoes) in the dryer set

on high for 30 minutes. After the clothes are heat-treated, have the child change back into their clothes and return to class. Heat the rest of their belongings and the temporary clothes on high for 30 minutes. Place any of the child's unneeded items, such as book bags, into a large plastic bag and tightly seal the bag.

5. Inform the parent/guardian.

6. Check areas where the student sits or affected belongings may be placed for extended periods of time. Although bed bugs only feed on humans, they can be found in many locations.

If bed bugs are confirmed (after trained staff or pest management professional have inspected) **in classroom/environment:**

1. Inform the parent/guardian of all the students in the classroom.

2. Follow a treatment plan, targeting certain affected areas of the school. Use only licensed pest control applicators if pesticides are going to be applied.

3. Follow vacuuming procedures for maintenance workers and custodians:

- Vacuum affected areas during normal after-school cleaning schedule, including floor and baseboards.
- Sprinkle about ¼ to ½ cup of talcum powder on the last section of floor to be vacuumed.
- Remove the bag and place in a tightly sealed plastic garbage bag for disposal.
- Do not use the same vacuum bag if moving to an un-infested area.

Additional ways for schools to prepare for bed bugs

- Keep supplies to collect specimens and hold infested items on hand: disposable gloves, trash and other sealable bags, plastic tarps, plastic storage bins and tape.
- Designate areas where potentially infested items are held temporarily.
- Keep all "Lost and Found" clothing, backpacks, etc. in closeable plastic storage bins (rather than in cardboard boxes), preferably in a central location.
- Establish a list of school personnel who need to be aware of the situation immediately in order to address the problem and to deal with questions from parents, staff and potentially the news media.
- Educate the school community (teachers, staff, parents and others) about bed bugs and the system's response to bed bugs at the beginning of the school year.

If students have an infestation at home:

Although bed bugs have nothing to do with cleanliness or socio-economic status, there is still a stigma that can come with having bed bugs. Parents may be hesitant to admit to having bed bugs, and a student may not want others to know he or she has an infestation at home. Work with the parents of any student living in an infested home to develop strategies for preventing the further spread of bed bugs.

- Determine if the infested home is being treated. Home remedies and do-it-yourself treatments are usually insufficient and could cause negative health effects or produce potential hazards in the home.
- Suggest clean, freshly laundered (on high heat setting) and sealed change of clothing be sent to school (as long as needed). Recommend sending only essential items to school with the student and inspect items upon arrival at school. If possible, offer to keep non-essential items overnight to help ensure the items are bed bug free. Suggest keeping school items sealed in a plastic bag or tote at home and limit items going back and forth from home to school until infestation is treated.
- At school, consider providing the student with plastic bags or bins in which to store his or her things to prevent bed bugs from spreading to other students' belongings.
- Continue to use these measures until successful treatment of the home has been verified.

This fact sheet was compiled from information provided by The Ohio State University, Virginia Tech University and Michigan State University. For more information, see <http://coloradoipmcenter.agsci.colostate.edu/> or contact deborah.young@colostate.edu.