



Recommendations for Schools

What's the problem with bed bugs?

Bed bug problems are becoming increasingly common in all types of environments, including schools. It's important for parents, teachers, school nurses and administrators to know what to do if bed bugs are found.

Bed bugs bite and they are a pest – but they have not been shown to transmit disease. The Health Department recommends that schools develop plans to help identify bed bug problems early and take action to prevent infestation.

What are bed bugs?

Bed bugs are small insects that feed on human blood. They are usually active at night when people are sleeping. Adult bed bugs have flat, rusty-red colored oval bodies. About the size of an apple seed, they are big enough to be easily seen, but often hide in cracks in furniture, floors or walls. When bed bugs feed, their bodies swell and become brighter red. They can live for several months without food or water.

What does a bite feel and look like?

Most bed bug bites are painless at first, but later may turn into large, itchy welts on the skin. These welts do not have a red spot in the center like flea bites.

How do bed bugs spread to and from school?

Anyone can carry bed bugs to and from school without knowing it, in backpacks or brief cases, upholstery, pillows, fabric or clothing.

If a bed bug is found on a person or their belongings, it doesn't mean that their home is infested. A bed bug could have traveled from one student to another at school. Schools can act as a hub, especially when student belongings are kept together and the bugs can move among these things.

How can schools prevent bed bugs from spreading?

It's very difficult for schools to know who might be bringing bed bugs into the school. That's why schools should develop administrative plans to prevent and limit the spread of bed bugs. Plans should include a written policy that limits the types of personal belongings a person may bring into school, and provide individual sealable storage containers for personal possessions, including coats and back packs. The school's Integrated Pest Management plan should also be updated to include bed bugs.

What should be done if a bed bug is found on a student or in their belongings?

Be sensitive to the problem and to the student's emotions, use discretion and don't overreact. Although bed bugs have nothing to do with cleanliness or socioeconomic status, the stigma still persists. There is no need to send the student home. Remove the student from the classroom so that the school nurse or another qualified person can examine the student and his or her belongings. Remove any bugs and double bag them for identification. *(See the photos on the front and back of this sheet.)* If a bed bug is found on a student or in their belongings, notify the parent or guardian.

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What should be done if a bed bug is found in a classroom?

If a bedbug is found in a classroom, that room should be inspected for bed bugs and managed by a qualified individual in accordance with the school's integrated pest management (IPM) policy.

If a student's home has bed bugs, how can it be managed at school?

Work with the student's parents to prevent further spread of bed bugs. Determine if the student's home is being treated.

To limit the spread of bed bugs between school and home:

- Store freshly laundered clothing in sealed plastic bags until the student leaves for school.
- Store shoes, jackets, backpacks and lunch bags in sealed plastic bags or containers at home.
- Examine backpacks and lunch boxes every day for bed bugs.
- Wash and dry clothes, jackets and backpacks on high heat for 40 minutes to kill bed bugs.
- Isolate the student's belongings in sealed plastic bags or containers in the nurse's office to keep bed bugs from spreading to other student's belongings.
- Keep clean clothes at school for the student to change into.
- Use a clothes dryer at school on high heat to kill and remove bed bugs from belongings.



● actual size of 5 mm



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