

RESPONSE TO BED BUGS IN MEDICAL FACILITIES



DEVELOPED BY THE NATIONAL PEST MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION



As more and more homes are infested with bed bugs, the bugs may be carried by patients, family, or staff into medical facilities. A medical facility may be primarily for short-term care (hospital stays, emergency rooms, clinics, and outpatient surgical centers) or for long-term care (assisted living, rehabilitation, and nursing homes). While there may be some differences in the approach of bed bug control between these types of medical facilities, all are sensitive environments when it comes to the use of pesticides in patient areas and around the sick or elderly. The issue of bed bugs in a medical facility can be emotional and generate anxiety in patients, family, and staff. These guidelines will help various types of medical facilities deal effectively with a bed bug incident.

THINGS TO AVOID

- Do not overreact. If bed bugs are discovered, there is rarely the need to close down a facility or even a portion of the facility beyond the immediate area of concern.
- Do not allow untrained staff to apply insecticides to control bed bugs.
- Widespread insecticide applications are usually not necessary.
- Avoid stigmatizing patients, family, or staff, whom you suspect may have brought bed bugs to the site.

BE PROACTIVE

- Develop a written "bed bug action plan" in advance of problems being identified with specific procedures and responsibilities for responding to a bed bug incident.
- Institute bed bug prevention measures, particularly in higher-risk areas.
 - Medical areas most prone to bed bug problems include long-term care, psychiatric wards, waiting rooms, and sites where family members stay overnight, such as maternity wards and hospice, laundries, and furniture storage areas.
 - Preventative measures may include monitoring for early detection of bed bugs, proper laundry handling procedures, aggressive housekeeping, harborage reduction, and awareness training for those entering long-term care in how to avoid bringing bed bugs with them.
- Implement a bed bug awareness and education program for each of the following sectors:
 - Doctors, nurses, aides and other health or social care providers.
 - Environmental services (housekeeping) and maintenance staff.
 - Admissions and other support staff.
 - Directors and administrators.
 - Family members of patients/residents in long-term care such as nursing homes or assisted living.
 - All staff should be alert for evidence of bed bugs.
 - » Environmental services should do routine inspections for bed bugs as part of daily service in patient rooms.
 - » Care givers should listen for reports of bites by patients and visitors, and look for possible bed bug bites on patients.
- If a facility experiences periodic introduction of bed bugs, consider implementing a regular detection program with the help of a pest management professional. Implement a periodic inspection and monitoring program in areas that are most prone to bed bugs such as lounges, patient and family waiting areas, storage areas for housekeeping and furniture, and laundries.



- Have a medical review committee develop the following:
 - An "approved" list of products which may be used should insecticides be considered necessary to control a bed bug infestation.
 - A list of medical conditions that preclude the use of each insecticide, and other restrictions on their use.
- Consider encasing mattresses and box springs with bed bug-proof encasements.



RESPONDING TO A BED BUG INCIDENT

- If bed bugs are reported or suspected, do the following:
 - Get specimens, if possible, for professional identification.
 - Arrange for an inspection as soon as possible by a qualified pest management professional.
- If the report is from a patient room:
 - Move the patient and take the room out of service.
 - Inspect personal items for bed bugs before moving patients to a new room and offer to wash or dry clean their clothes.
 - Medical equipment (wheel chairs, IV stands, etc.) and beds should not be moved to the new room unless they can be verified as not containing any bed bugs.
 - A pest management professional should inspect the suspect room, adjacent rooms, the patient's new room, all furniture and equipment, and lounge and public areas the family may have been using.
- Bed bug service must take into consideration the potential health impacts of insecticide on patients who are ill.
 - Emphasize non-chemical control measures.
 - If insecticides must be used, use only those products and methods approved by the facility, and only in unoccupied rooms.
 - Incorporate non-chemical methods such as steam treatment, heat, aggressive cleaning and laundering, and targeted vacuuming wherever practical.
 - Medical equipment and furniture is best disinfested with heat or fumigation off-site.
 - Mattresses and box springs can be steamed, protected with bed bug proof encasements, heat treated in a chamber, fumigated, or discarded.

- Bed bug service is not complete after a single service visit.
 - Rooms that have been serviced for bed bugs should be rescheduled for follow-up inspection, re-serviced as needed, and kept off-line until the bed bugs have been successfully controlled.
 - Affected rooms and adjacent rooms should be inspected for 2-3 months to ensure that no isolated pockets of bed bugs remain. Consider the installation of bed bug detection devices or bed bug scent detection canine teams.
 - Also inspect waiting rooms, laundry rooms, lounges, cafeterias, children's play areas, and other areas as appropriate.

BED BUG PREVENTION

- To avoid new introductions of bed bugs into assisted living facilities and long-term care consider:
 - A bed bug information sheet including information on how to avoid bringing bed bugs into the facility.
 - A prohibition on used or secondhand furniture.
 - A requirement that furniture, luggage, and other personal items be inspected by a professional (or a certified canine bed bug detection dog scent detection team) and declared free of bed bugs, or heat treated or fumigated before coming into the facility.
- In long-term care and assisted living facilities, regularly vacuum or steam clean areas prone to bed bugs (under and around beds, upholstered furniture, luggage racks, wall/floor junction, etc.)
- Reduce clutter, seal cracks, crevices and holes near beds, repair or replace peeling wallpaper or paint, and take other actions to reduce bed bug hiding places.
- Follow good laundry handling practices to prevent the dispersal of bed bugs:
 - Keep carts in the hallway during room service.
 - Keep the clean and dirty laundry separate on carts and in processing room.
 - Do not place dirty laundry in linen storerooms or linen closet or any room that contains clean linens.
 - If dirty laundry is transported to an outside cleaning facility, do not use the same vehicle for clean linens unless clean and dirty laundry can be completely isolated from each other.