

Bed Bugs Policy

Effective: September 24, 2014

Applies to: All members of Village Family Health Team and contractors

Purpose:

- Outline the strategies for preventing and managing bed bug transmission at the Village FHT as well as at home visits
- To reduce the risk to employees and patients
- Make staff aware of how to identify bed bugs and the signs of infestation
- Provide strategies for prevention of acquiring and/or spreading bed bugs

Policy:

Village Family Health Team recognizes the current outbreak of bed bugs within the City of Toronto. In its efforts to provide a safe and healthy workplace, VFHT is committed to a bed bug free environment.

What are Bed Bugs?

Bed bugs are small, oval insects that feed on human blood. They can be found almost anywhere- in crevices of floors and walls, bedding, and upholstered furniture. Bed bugs do not spread disease, but their bites can be very itchy.

Adult bed bugs are oval, wingless, about 1/5 inches long and rusty red or mahogany in color. The young appear identical, but are smaller and a yellowish white color. The female bed bugs lay from 200 to 500 eggs (in batches of 10 to 50) on rough surfaces, which will hatch in about 10 days. Infestations are hard to control without pesticides.

Note: Bed bugs do not lay eggs on their host

What to Look For

- Bites on the skin (raised bumps like the bites of mosquitoes or fleas, or raised welts)
- Bites often occur in a linear fashion in groups of three
- Waste matter (reddish brown spots or black spots on sleeping areas or furniture)
- Bloodstains or spots on bedding
- Eggs or eggshells (about the size of a grain of rice)

Procedures:

All staff, students and contractors must document in the patient chart using the Red Flag Alert and report the following circumstances regarding bed bugs immediately to the Executive Director:

- Any bed bug sighting
- Potential bed bug sightings (if not able to accurately identify the type of bug)
- Patients reports that he or she has bed bugs
- Patient reports that he or she suspects they have bed bugs
- Staff suspects the patient has bed bugs

If You Suspect Bed Bug Activity:

- Direct patient immediately into the exam room. If there is no open exam room, ask the patient to wait on a hard chair in the area outside pharmacy.
- When scheduling an appointment, request that the patient not bring any extra items such as bags, blankets or strollers that may harbour bed bugs. These items should be left outside the clinic. If patient brings extra items, secure all items in a large black garbage bag found in the bed bug kit
- Ensure the patient remains in the same exam room for all clinic interactions
- Access the Bed Bug Kit in the clean storage room
- Wear protective paper suit and shoe covers to examine the patient if bugs are visible. Explain to the patient why you need to do this beforehand.
- If you see a suspicious bug on the person, their belongings or in the room, try to capture it in a specimen container. If you kill it, save the tissue. (It is helpful to provide evidence in order to use specific sprays)
- Provide education, resources and reassurance to the patient. Advise the patient that they need to take steps to ensure they live in a bed bug free setting. There is a picture of a bed bug in the kit
- Speak with the case worker or Toronto Public Health, if patient desires
- If you see evidence of bed bugs including the bug or bites, immediately inform the Executive Director or Admin Assistant
- The Executive Director or Admin Assistant will contact the Pest Control company to arrange for on-site service. The number is posted on the Bed Bug Kit
- Vacuum all areas where the patient travelled including black carpets. Empty the contents of the vacuum into a garbage bag and seal the bag. Ensure the vacuum is not harbouring any bed bugs
- Tape the bottom of the door so no bed bugs can leave the room
- Inspect your belongings to ensure there are no bed bugs
- Remove your belongings and tape the bottom of the door to prevent them from leaving the room. If the infestation is extensive, all adjoining rooms should also be treated
- Work in another space until pest control services have been applied
- Follow any room use directions on the door.
- The Executive Director or Admin Assistant will also advise the cleaning staff

Home Visits:

- Team members should ask patients if they have a bed bug infestation in order to protect themselves.
- Team members that enter patient's homes should be aware of where they set down possessions, such as bags or coats and medical equipment, and should inspect items once they have left the home.

- When visiting bring only what is needed and avoid placing home visit bag or purse etc close to walls and furniture. If this is unavoidable place belongings in a closed white plastic kitchen bag and examine it for any bed bugs before leaving.
- If the patient is known to have bed bugs, wear a paper protective suit prior to entering the client's home. Let the client know that you will be doing this before your visit.
- Stand or sit on hard, flat surfaces and avoid upholstered furniture, couches, pillows and beds.
- If you feel you have been in a high risk situation then it is recommended that all clothing worn during the visit should be taken off as soon as you get home and put in a hot dryer (60 Celsius) for 30 minutes and then washed in a normal fashion.
- If you do frequent home visits then it is recommended to have a pair of older shoes or runners in a white plastic kitchen bag that you wear in and out of the home and change your shoes before returning to work or home

Continuing Patient Care:

- The primary care provider should speak with the patient each time they attend the clinic while infested with bed bugs. The conversation should address:
 - the health issue posed by bed bugs to both the patient and the team
 - strategies to manage bed bugs in their residence
 - offer of support and resources.
- It is expected that care is provided as long as the health care provider has access to protective clothing

Prevention:

- Bed bugs have to hitch a ride to travel (they cannot jump or fly), therefore taking precautions while at work will reduce the risk of picking up bed bugs and transferring them to another location
- Ask clients to place their belongings in one specific place – either on a tiled floor or a hard, flat surface that can be wiped with Cavi Wipes after the visit.
- Wipe down all services (chairs, tables, mats) with Cavi Wipes following program activity.
- Inspect all deliveries to ensure no insects are present
- Hang personal items such as bags, briefcases and coats from a door knob or hook to keep them off the floor
- If you suspect you have been where there are bed bugs, check your shoes, clothes and cuffs, and shake out loose clothing before getting into a vehicle
- Inspect personal belongings for any sightings
- Pay particular attention if you work at multiple locations that you don't transport bed bugs from one location to another
- Reduce clutter in your workspace
- Encourage clients to limit personal belongings brought into the clinic

Resources:

CAMH Bed Bug Manual in Village Share under Infection Control and OH&S

Toronto Public Health:

<http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=34efebfc2bb31410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD>