



Bed Bugs General Guidelines (Parent Resource)

Health Services
Mat-Su Borough School District
501 N. Gulkana
Palmer, AK 99645
P: (907) 746-9200

DESCRIPTION/SIGNS & SYMPTOMS:

- Bed bugs are small, reddish-brown, flattened, oval shaped insects that feed on the blood of people while they sleep.
- They are wingless and are about the size of an apple seed. When bed bugs feed, their bodies swell.
- Bed bugs do not transmit disease but infestations can be difficult and expensive to control.
- Usually, bed bugs will hide during the day and only come out to feed during the night. Unlike head lice, they do not live on a person; however, they can move from one place to another in backpacks, clothing, luggage, books, and other items.
- Bed bug infestations in schools are uncommon.
- Bites occur all over the body, particularly on exposed areas, such as the face, neck, arms, and hands. Although the bite does not hurt at the time, there may be a resultant skin itch and red welts, similar to a mosquito bite. Wounds do not have a red spot in the center (like flea bites). Some persons do not develop welts at all and can carry bed bugs without knowing it.
- Bed bugs can cause significant anxiety and sleeplessness.
- **Bed bugs have nothing to do with cleanliness or socioeconomic status.**

INCUBATION PERIOD:

- Bed bugs can live up to several months or even a year without food or water.
- They can withstand temperatures below zero for many days.

MODE OF SPREAD:

- Bed bugs can crawl onto or off of a person (or their belongings) at any time. Commonly, a few bed bugs will hitchhike to school from an infested home by hiding in a student's clothing or backpack.
- Bed bugs are large enough to be seen, but they hide in cracks in furniture, floors, walls, suitcases or clothing. You may also notice small bloodstains from crushed insects or dark spots (droppings) on linens or bed coverings.
- Bed bugs may travel from one apartment to another.

<https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/bedbugs/>



Bed Bugs General Guidelines (Nurse Protocol)

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ROLE OF SCHOOL NURSE:

- Be discreet and assure confidentiality when examining a student suspected of bed bug infestation. Students living in an infested home may feel anxious or tired during the school day. Remove/collect any bugs found for identification. Try to keep the specimens as intact as possible. Contact the student's parent or guardian, if a confirmed bed bug was found on a student, to inform them of the presence of a bed bug(s) on their child and/or send a letter home.
- 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.
- Instruct parents to store their child's freshly laundered clothing in sealed plastic bags or containers until they are put on in the morning. This prevents bed bugs from hiding in the clothing and being carried to school. Limit items going back and forth from home to school until infestation is treated.
- Recommend keeping of backpacks, lunchboxes, and other items upon arrival at school in the nurse office or other available non-classroom space to allow for discreet separation of belongings on a daily basis.
- Continue to use these measures until successful treatment of the home has been verified. Basic information about bed bugs including description, signs and symptoms, strategies to monitor for and eliminate infestation and where to get further assistance should be included in the notification. Ongoing pest management should be overseen by the building administrator or designee.

CONTROL MEASURES: REPORTING:

- Bed bugs are not a condition reportable to the Alaska Section of Epidemiology unless there are known outbreaks of an unusual number.

EXCLUSIONS:

- Students should not be excluded from school due to bed bugs.

RETURN TO SCHOOL:

- Exclusion is not required.

TREATMENT:

- Treat students as needed for bites.

FOLLOW-UP: School health personnel should manage the case by re-inspecting student belongings, desk, classroom, etc. until the problem is resolved. Student belongings such as backpacks can be isolated and stored in tight sealing plastic bags or bins both at home and school to prevent further spread of bed bugs.