



Protecting Yourself from Bed Bugs on the Job

Those involved in social and home health care work may sometimes be at risk for picking up bed bugs from an infested home. Understand the risks and take steps to reduce them.

- **Recognize and understand bed bugs**

- √ Know what bed bugs look like in all stages so you can tell if you see them.
- √ Bed bugs are NOT generally active in the daytime.
- √ They can NOT fly.
- √ They do NOT run around in the open under normal conditions.
- √ Bed bugs do NOT infest people's bodies but may hide in belongings.
- √ Bed bugs hide in the day near where people sleep or sit for long periods.
- √ Only an adult, pregnant female bed bug can start a new infestation.

- **DO find out ahead of time** if the client's home is known to have bed bugs so you can be especially vigilant.

- **DON'T bring bags or personal belongings inside** the client's home.

- **DO carry your own portable stool** to sit on while working with the client. If this is not possible, be sure to sit on a hard surface, not plush furniture or beds.

- **DO wear light colored clothing and shoes that can be tossed in the dryer** on HIGH. As a routine, carefully shake out your clothes while standing outside before returning to your car or office.

- **DO carry a set of clean clothes** with you in a zip lock bag. If you suspect bed bugs may have gotten on your clothes, put on clean clothes. Carefully remove the infested clothes and put them into the zip lock bag. Put them in the clothes dryer on HIGH for 20 minutes. There are also dissolvable bags available that can be tossed into the wash.

- **DO be vigilant about what to look for.** Bed bugs are visible but the youngest ones are very small. Inspect your own living and work space on a regular basis.

- **DO NOT assume that skin irritation or bites you may have are due to bed bugs.** There are many potential reasons for skin discomfort or what look like "bites". In addition, most people do not react to bed bug bites. Reactions, when they do occur, vary greatly in appearance.

- **DO NOT spray yourself or your belongings with insect repellents or pesticides.** Bed bugs are not repelled or killed by such products. Sprays can also trigger asthma.

- **DO seek the services of a *qualified* pest control operator** if you suspect your home may be infested with bed bugs. Individuals cannot solve this problem by themselves!