February 1, 2017

Dear Families,

We are writing because of concerns raised by media reports of bed bugs being present in our building.

Yesterday, a staff member reported what he thought was a bed bug in a classroom at Northeast College High School. The report could not be confirmed because the specimen was not brought to the school nurse for inspection.

As an extra precaution, we are following the standard protocol for a bed bug discovery. The District thoroughly inspected and cleaned the classroom last night and will continue for several days. In addition, our pest contractor has been called to conduct a thorough examination of the building and treat as appropriate. This is a coordinated effort between the nurse’s office, the custodial team and the Environmental Health & Safety Office.

It is important to note that bed bugs do not carry disease and there has never been an infestation of bedbugs in any District school.

Attached is some useful information from experts about bed bugs and how to avoid them in the workplace.

We hope this addresses any concerns regarding media reports or rumors you may have heard. Please feel free to call our offices if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

Linus J. Guillory Jr., PhD
Principal
Northeast College High School

Barbara F. Zelazny
Principal
Northwest Junior High at Douglass
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 BED BUG BITE FEEL AND LOOK LIKE?
Most bed bug bites are initially painless, but later turn into large, itchy skin welts. These welts do not have a red spot in the center like flea bites.

ARE BED BUGS DANGEROUS?
Although bed bugs are a nuisance, they are not known to spread disease.

HOW DOES A HOME BECOME INFESTED WITH BED BUGS?
In most cases, people carry bed bugs into their homes unknowingly, in infested luggage, furniture, bedding, or clothing. Bed bugs may also travel between apartments through small crevices and cracks in walls and floors.

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY HOME IS INFESTED WITH BED BUGS?
You may notice itchy skin welts. You may also see the bed bugs themselves, small bloodstains from crushed insects, or dark spots from their droppings. It is often hard to see them because they hide in or near beds, other furniture, and in cracks.

HOW CAN I GET RID OF BED BUGS?
The Health Department recommends that homeowners hire pest control professionals licensed by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to get rid of bed bugs.

The pest control company should:
• Inspect your home to confirm the presence of bed bugs.
• Find and eliminate their hiding places.
• Treat your home with special cleaning and/or pesticides if necessary.
• Make return visits to make sure bed bugs are gone.

Be sure you hire a licensed exterminator. Ask to see a copy of the license or check directly with DEC by calling (718) 482-4994 or visiting http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dshm/pesticide/bppman.htm

IS IT NECESSARY TO USE PESTICIDES TO GET RID OF BED BUGS?
The best way to get rid of bed bugs is to clean, disinfect and eliminate their hiding places. Since bed bugs can live for several months without food and water, pest control professionals may use a pesticide. Talk with the professional about safe use of pesticides and make sure he/she:
• Uses the least toxic pesticide.
• Follows instructions and warnings on product labels.
• Advises you about staying out of treated rooms and when it is safe to reenter.
• Treats mattresses and sofas by applying small amounts of pesticides on seams only. Pesticides should never be sprayed on top of mattresses or sofas.
HOW CAN I GET RID OF BED BUGS?

1. Find out where bed bugs are hiding in your home.
   Use a bright flashlight to look for bed bugs or their dark droppings in bedroom furniture. Or use a hot hair dryer to force them out of hiding spaces and cracks. Check:
   - Behind your headboard.
   - In the seams and tufts of your mattress and inside the box spring.
   - Along bedroom baseboard cracks.
   - In and around nightstands.
   - Other bedroom items, including window and door casings, pictures, moldings, nearby furniture, loose wallpaper, cracks in plaster and partitions, and clutter.

2. Clean areas where bed bugs are likely to hide.
   - Clean bedding, linens, curtains, rugs, carpets, and clothes. To kill bed bugs, wash items in hot water and dry them on the highest dryer setting. Soak delicate clothes in warm water with lots of laundry soap for several hours before rinsing.
   - Scrub mattress seams with a stiff brush to dislodge bed bugs and their eggs.
   - Vacuum mattresses, bed frames, nearby furniture, floors, and carpets. Pay special attention to cracks and open spaces. Immediately after vacuuming, put the vacuum cleaner bag in a sealed plastic bag, and dispose of it in an outdoor container.
   - If you find bed bugs on a mattress, cover it with a waterproof, zippered mattress cover labeled “allergen rated,” or “for dust mites.” Keep the cover on for at least one year.
   - If your box spring is infested, seal it inside a vinyl box spring cover for at least one year. If no cover is available, throw the box spring away.
   - Dispose of infested items or clutter that can’t be cleaned. Seal tightly in a plastic garbage bag and discard in an outside container.
   - Repair cracks in plaster and loose wallpaper.

3. Be very cautious about using pesticides yourself. Pesticides can be hazardous to people and pets. If you choose to use a pesticide, or a licensed exterminator suggests you use one, follow these precautions:
   - Only use pesticides clearly labeled for bed bug extermination. Never use a cockroach spray, ant spray, or any other pesticide that does not list bed bugs on the label.
   - Follow label instructions exactly.
   - Never spray pesticides on top of mattresses or sofas, or in areas where children are present.
   - Never purchase or use a product without a manufacturer’s label and never buy pesticides from street vendors.
   - Avoid “insecticide bombs” and “foggers” in your home. These products can spread hazardous chemicals throughout your home.

HOW CAN I KEEP BED BUGS OUT OF MY HOME?

   - Wash clothing and bedding immediately after returning from a trip.
   - Inspect used furniture for bed bugs before bringing it into your home.
   - Never bring discarded bed frames, mattresses, box springs, or upholstered furniture into your home.

HOW CAN I KEEP MY FURNITURE FROM INFESTING SOMEONE ELSE’S HOME?

   - Never resell or donate infested furniture.
   - If you throw infested furniture away, make it undesirable to others by cutting or poking holes in its upholstery or making it unusable. Tape a sign to it that says, “Infested with Bed Bugs.”

This fact sheet is available at nyc.gov/health. For more copies, call 311 and ask for “Stop Bed Bugs Safely.”
¿QUÉ SON LAS CHINCHES?
Las chinches son pequeños insectos que se alimentan de sangre humana y que usualmente están activos en la noche cuando la gente duerme. Las chinches adultas tienen cuerpos ovalados y planos, de color rojo óxido. Casi del tamaño de una semilla de manzana, son lo suficientemente grandes para ser fácilmente visibles, pero con frecuencia se esconden en grietas de muebles, pisos o paredes. Cuando las chinches se alimentan, sus cuerpos se hinchan y se vuelven color rojo brillante. Pueden vivir por varios meses sin comida ni agua.

¿QUÉ SE SIENTE TRAS LA PICADURA DE UNA CHINCHE Y CUÁL ES SU Apariencia?
La mayoría de picaduras de chinches inicialmente no causan dolor, pero posteriormente aparecen ronchas grandes en la piel que producen pico (rasquiera). Estas ronchas no tienen un punto rojo en el centro como las producidas por picaduras de pulgas.

¿LAS CHINCHES SON PELIGROSAS?
Aunque las chinches son una molestia, no se sabe que transmitan enfermedades.

¿CÓMO SE INFESTA UNA CASA CON CHINCHES?
En la mayoría de casos, la gente transporta las chinches a sus casas sin saberlo, en equipaje, muebles, ropa de cama o vestidos infestados. Las chinches también pueden viajar entre apartamentos a través de pequeñas grietas en las paredes y en los pisos.

¿CÓMO SÉ SI MI CASA ESTÁ INFESTADA CON CHINCHES?
Usted puede notar ronchas en la piel que producen pico (rasquiera). También puede ver las chinches, pequeñas manchas de sangre procedentes de insectos aplastados, o puntos oscuros que son sus excrementos. Con frecuencia es difícil verlas debido a que se esconden en o cerca de las camas, en otros muebles y en grietas.

¿CÓMO PUEDO DESHACERME DE LAS CHINCHES?
El Departamento de Salud recomienda que los propietarios de casas o departamentos contraten profesionales del control de plagas autorizados por el Departamento de Conservación Ambiental del Estado de Nueva York (New York State Department of Environmental Conservation-DEC, por sus siglas en inglés) para deshacerse de las chinches.

La compañía de control de plagas debe:
- Inspeccionar su casa para confirmar la presencia de chinches.
- Encontrar y eliminar sus escondites.
- Tratar su hogar con productos limpiadores especiales y/o insecticidas si es necesario.
- Hacer visitas de control para asegurarse de que las chinches han sido eliminadas.

Asegúrese de contratar a un exterminador autorizado. Pida ver una copia de la licencia o verifique directamente con el DEC llamando al (718) 482-4994 o visitando http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dshm/pestcid/appman.htm.

¿ES NECESARIO USAR INSECTICIDAS PARA DESHACERSE DE LAS CHINCHES?
La mejor manera de deshacerse de las chinches es limpiar, desinfectar y eliminar sus escondites. Considerando que las chinches pueden vivir durante varios meses sin alimentos ni agua, los profesionales del control de plagas pueden usar un insecticida. Hable con el profesional acerca del uso seguro de insecticidas y asegúrese de que él/ella:
- Usa el insecticida que sea menos tóxico.
- Sigue las instrucciones y advertencias en las etiquetas del producto.
- Le aconseja a usted que permanezca fuera de los cuartos tratados y le indica cuándo es seguro volver a entrar en ellos.
- Trata los colchones y sofás aplicando pequeñas cantidades de insecticida solamente en las costuras. Los insecticidas nunca se deben rociar encima de los colchones o sofás.
¿CÓMO PUEDO DESHACERME DE LAS CHINCHES?

1. Averigüe en donde se esconden las chinches en su casa.
   Use una linterna de luz brillante para buscar chinches o sus excrementos en los muebles del dormitorio. O use un secador de cabello caliente para forzarlas a salir de sus escondites y grietas. Busque:
   - Detrás de la cabecera de la cama.
   - En las costuras y pliegues del colchón y dentro de la base del colchón (box-spring).
   - A lo largo de las grietas en los rodapiés del dormitorio.
   - En y alrededor de las mesillas de noche.
   - En otras partes del dormitorio, incluyendo los marcos de ventanas y puertas, cuadros, molduras, muebles cercanos, papel tapiz, grietas en el yeso y en las paredes, y en las cosas amontonadas.

2. Limpie las áreas en donde es probable que se escondan las chinches.
   - Limpie la ropa de cama, cortinas, tapetes, alfombras y ropa. Para matar las chinches, lave los artículos en agua caliente y séquelos en secadora a la máxima temperatura. Ponga en remojo la ropa delicada en agua caliente con mucho detergente durante varias horas antes de enjuagarla.
   - Refriague las costuras de los colchones con un cepillo fuerte para sacar las chinches y sus huesos.
   - Pase el aspirador por los colchones, estructuras de las camas, muebles cercanos a la cama, pisos y alfombras. Preste especial atención a las grietas y a los espacios abiertos. Inmediatamente después de aspirar, coloque la bolsa de la aspiradora en una bolsa de plástico sellada y bótele en un recipiente fuera de la casa.
   - Si encuentra chinches en un colchón, cúbralo con una funda para colchón impermeable con cremallera que esté etiquetada "para alérgenos" o "para ácaros". Mantenga la funda puesta por al menos un año.
   - Si su base de colchón (boxspring) está infestada, colóquele una cubierta de vinilo para base de colchón y déjela sellada durante al menos un año. Si no hay funda disponible, bote la base de colchón.

3. Tenga mucho cuidado con el uso de los insecticidas.
   Los insecticidas pueden ser peligrosos para las personas y las mascotas. Si usted decide usar un insecticida, o si un exterminador autorizado le sugiere que lo use, siga estas instrucciones:
   - Solamente use insecticidas que estén etiquetados claramente para exterminar chinches. Nunca use un insecticida para cucarachas, insecticida para hormigas ni otro insecticida que no indique chinches en la etiqueta.
   - Siga exactamente las instrucciones de la etiqueta.
   - Nunca aplique insecticidas encima de los colchones o sofás, o en áreas en donde estén presentes niños.
   - Nunca compre ni use un producto sin una etiqueta de fabricante y nunca compré insecticidas a vendedores callejeros.
   - Evite las "bombas insecticidas" y los "foggers" en su casa. Estos productos pueden esparcir productos químicos peligrosos en su casa.

¿CÓMO PUEDO IMPEDIR QUE LAS CHINCHES ENTREN EN MI CASA?

- Lave la ropa y la ropa de cama inmediatamente después de regresar de un viaje.
- Inspeccione los muebles usados para ver si tienen chinches antes de llevarlos a su casa.
- Nunca lleve a su casa artículos desechados tales como estructuras de cama, colchones, bases de colchón, o muebles tapizados.

¿CÓMO PUEDO EVITAR QUE MIS MUEBLES INFESTEN LA CASA DE OTRAS PERSONAS?

- Nunca revenda ni done muebles infestados.
- Si usted bota muebles infestados, ¡aga que no sean atractivos para otros cortando o asegurando la tapicería, o haciendo que no se puedan usar. Coloque un aviso que diga "infestado con chinches".

Esta hoja está disponible en nyc.gov/health. Para más copias, llame al 311 y pida "Eliminar las chinches de manera segura" (en inglés: "Stop Bed Bugs Safely").
Steps to Avoiding Bed Bugs in the Workplace

Bed bugs introductions can occur when a bed bug is transferred from an infested area to a new location on someone’s belongings. Infestations in office buildings are highly unlikely because there are no sleeping facilities. The risk of transferring an introduced adult female bed bug with fertile eggs from the office to your home is very low, but still possible.

If you work in an office with occasional bed bug introductions, isolate items you bring to and from work in sealable plastic bags or containers. Transport only what you need.

A bed bug was found in the workplace!
What do I do?!?

Has a qualified professional identified the specimen as a bed bug?

Yes.

No.

Were you where the bed bug was found or the suspected point of introduction?

Yes.

No.

Many things can be confused with bed bugs. Verify the identity of collected specimens.

• Inspect yourself and your belongings for bed bugs.
• Keep a heightened awareness about bed bugs, learn the signs, and inspect your belongings regularly.

The more you know:

• Only adult female bed bugs are able to begin an infestation. They are highly visible.
• Heating items over 125°F is the most reliable way to kill bed bugs!

Don’t:

• Panic. One bed bug is an introduction, not an infestation.
• Insist upon pesticide sprays in the building. Pesticides are often unnecessary in an office situation and may not be effective.

For additional information, including detailed instructions on conducting inspections and using a dryer to treat for bed bugs, visit: www.nysipm.cornell.edu/whats_bugging_you/bed_bugs
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   • Vacuum mattresses, bed frames, nearby furniture, floors and carpets. Pay special attention to cracks and open spaces. Immediately after vacuuming, put the vacuum cleaner bag in a sealed plastic bag, and dispose of it in an outdoor container.
   • If you find bed bugs on a mattress, cover it with a waterproof, zippered mattress cover labeled “allergen rated,” or “for dust mites.” Keep the cover on for at least one year.
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If you work in an office with occasional bed bug introductions, isolate items you bring to and from work in sealable plastic bags or containers. Transport only what you need.

A bed bug was found in the workplace! What do I do?!?

Has a qualified professional identified the specimen as a bed bug?

No.

Many things can be confused with bed bugs. Verify the identity of collected specimens.

Yes.

Were you where the bed bug was found or the suspected point of introduction?

No.

• Inspect yourself and your belongings for bed bugs.
  • Keep a heightened awareness about bed bugs, learn the signs, and inspect your belongings regularly.

Yes.

• Isolate bags and accessories carried into bed bug area in sealed plastic bags.
  • Upon returning home, place all washable items directly into the dryer. If you have to walk through the house to the dryer, put all items in a plastic bag to transport them through your home.
  • Run the dryer on high heat for 25+ minutes.

The more you know:

• Only adult female bed bugs are able to begin an infestation. They are highly visible.
  • Heating items over 125°F is the most reliable way to kill bed bugs!

Don’t:

• Panic. One bed bug is an introduction, not an infestation.
• Insist upon pesticide sprays in the building. Pesticides are often unnecessary in an office situation and may not be effective.

For additional information, including detailed instructions on conducting inspections and using a dryer to treat for bed bugs, visit: www.nysipm.cornell.edu/whats_bugging_you/bed_bugs