



# Bedbugs

## Guide for Schools



**Produced by**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

After a decades-long near-absence, bedbugs have now returned to Québec and in many places around the world. As a result, schools may wonder about the need to develop specific interventions to deal with this problem.

This guide provides tips to school administrators and staff, particularly to individuals designated to deal with cases of bedbugs in schools. Its goal is to help them with interventions when there are signs of the presence of bedbugs in the school or indications that someone might have been bitten by this insect. The guide is also intended for professionals from Health and Social Service Centres assigned to schools and who work with the latter when more complex cases arise.

The guide aims to provide information about bedbugs, how to detect them and best practices to manage suspected or confirmed infestations. It includes tools, such as an interview grid and a form letter for parents, to support the school's procedures when it has to cope with a bedbug problem.

It is unlikely that bedbugs will multiply in school, and the presence of a bedbug does not mean that a school is infested. However, bedbugs can spread to homes by travelling from one object (e.g. bag, piece of clothing) to another. Intervention is key to prevent bedbugs from spreading.

Rapid intervention in schools limits the impacts on health and quality of life, and contributes to reducing home infestations.

## 2. WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

### Bedbugs

Bedbugs are brownish, oval-shaped, flat insects that have no wings. They are 4 to 7 millimetres long and visible to the naked eye. They look like flattened apple seeds. They feed on human blood during sleep and are mainly active at night. They can also bite during the day if there is no food available at night. They feed every 3 to 7 days.



© 2006, Piotr Naskrecki. Public Health Image Library

Bedbugs and their eggs live mostly in bedrooms. At the beginning of an infestation, they tend to hide along the seams of mattresses and on box springs. If the infestation is important, bedbugs can be found in upholstered furniture, cushions, bedding, curtains, cracks in walls and floors, behind mouldings, under wallpaper, behind picture frames and other places.

Bedbugs don't fly or jump, but can move from one object to another (e.g. school bag, coat, clothes). Unlike lice, they don't live on people. They have a lifespan of about five months, but can survive up to a year without eating (they go dormant).

## 3. HEALTH RISKS

Bedbugs do not transmit diseases to humans, but their bites can cause various symptoms. The welts look like mosquito bites. People can have different reactions to bedbug bites, ranging from no reaction at all to intense itching; the bites can cause secondary infections when scratched. Being bitten repeatedly during the night can disturb sleep and cause anxiety in some people. Having bedbugs at home can also result in people isolating themselves from others because they feel ashamed or are afraid of spreading the problem. It is important to remember that improper use of insecticides can be harmful to health and to the environment.



## **Prevention**

Even if your school has never had to deal with a bedbug problem, there should be an action plan to prevent and manage bedbugs so you can quickly determine who does what and when. It is much easier to handle a bedbug problem when there is an action plan in place that includes prevention, training, early detection, and immediate management of cases. **To this end, the school should designate a staff member to be in charge of the bedbug management plan.** Schools can ask for help from health care providers (CSSS and public health) to develop and implement their action plans.

To better detect bedbugs, all staff members should learn to recognize the insects and traces of their presence. Professionals from the health network can provide training and information material upon request.

Ideally, students' personal belongings should be kept separate, even if no bedbugs have been observed. The same applies to items belonging to staff members.

## **Potential Situations**

A number of situations can arise at school:

- A person informs the school that there are bedbugs at his or her home.
- Someone has bites.
  - Frequent welts that look like mosquito bites can be an indication that there are bedbugs at home. To be sure, a medical visit may be required to identify the nature of the welts.
- Bedbugs are involuntarily carried from home to school.
  - Bedbugs can hide in clothes or personal items (e.g. school bags, school supplies, agendas).

Finding a bedbug at school does not mean that the school is infested. An infestation occurs when bedbugs multiply and there are signs of their presence (e.g. eggs, nymphs, adults) in the environment. When in doubt, it may be necessary to talk to an exterminator (pest controller) to confirm the type of insect that has been found.

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## **Communication**

In these situations, it is important to inform the person in charge of the bedbug management plan as quickly as possible. A meeting with the student should be set up to discuss and evaluate the situation.

## **4. WHAT TO DO**

### **Evaluation**

If bedbugs are suspected at home, the person in charge of the management plan should meet with the student in private to

- discuss the situation. The information should be adapted to the student's age;
- if possible, ask the student if there are bedbugs at his or her home;
- If the student is aged 14 or over, check for bites or welts on visible parts of the arms or legs. If need be, ask the student to roll up his or her sleeves or pant legs;
- If the student is under 14, consent from the parent or guardian is needed before proceeding with a visual inspection of the arms and legs. You can get consent by contacting the parent or guardian directly or by sending a passive consent letter (the parent or guardian must respond before a specific date if he or she does not want the school to do a visual inspection of the child's arms and legs).

Bedbug bites are most often found on the arms and legs, but also on all body parts exposed during sleep. Scratching can cause redness or infection. Note that the welts resemble other skin problems (e.g. other bug bites, scabies, eczema) and their presence does not confirm that there are bedbugs at the student's home.

**An interview grid is presented in Appendix 1.**



The person in charge of the management plan must determine if a case is suspected or confirmed.

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**Suspected case:** Dermatological signs (e.g. bites) on a person's skin or environmental signs (e.g. insects) on clothing or personal belongings (without confirmation of the signs or source of the infestation).

**Confirmed case:** Bedbug infestation confirmed by the student or parents, or repeated observation of dermatological AND environmental signs.

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If a case is suspected, it is recommended to get in touch with the parents to determine the origin of those signs. Weekly follow-up is advised until all signs have disappeared. Bedbugs don't necessarily come from the student's home; sometimes it is impossible to determine their origin. Bedbugs can move from one apartment to another, and the place where there are the most bugs is not necessarily where the infestation began.

The following section is a list of signs that can confirm the presence of bedbugs at a student's home.

## **Signs there are bedbugs at home**

### Environmental signs

Signs that confirm the presence of bedbugs are usually found along the seams of mattresses and on box springs or bedding (e.g. sheets). They include the following:

- Blood spots
- Droppings (black specks)
- Eggs (small and translucent)
- Yellowish exuviae (cast-off skins)
- Insects at all stages of life (nymphs or adults)

### Dermatological signs

- Bedbug bites found on the arms, shoulders, ankles, legs, back and sometimes on the face.
- Welts look like mosquito bites.
- New bites discovered every day.
- At the beginning of an infestation, bedbugs often bite only one person.
- People can have different reactions to the bites: some people might have no reaction at all while others can have severe allergic reactions.

Note: If a person is not bitten again, welts should disappear after a few days.

## Intervention

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### The student should not be excluded from school

School administration and staff should use discretion to ensure the student is not ostracized, picked on or ridiculed. The student should not be sent home.

A complete home extermination can take several weeks to several months. In this kind of situation, it is important to remember that anyone can have a bedbug problem at some point in time. There is no need to be ashamed or to blame someone for it.

**Rather, it's important to act quickly and collaboratively to find solutions to the problem.**

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If an infestation at home is confirmed, the designated person at school should do the following, depending on the situation:

- Contact the parents to explain the problem to them, insisting on the fact that they are not responsible for the situation.
- Working with the parent, assess the situation at the home using the form provided in Appendix 1, determine the need to implement measures to limit bedbug spread at school, and provide advice that is relevant to that situation.
- If needed, set up the same measures for the student's brothers and sisters who attend school.
- Determine if an information letter should be sent to all parents of the children who might have come into contact with the infested person's belongings. A form letter is presented in Appendix 2. You can also give them the pamphlet *Let's Fight Bedbugs* (see Appendix).
- Evaluate the parents' capacity to put in place the measures required to get rid of bedbugs at home. If they are unable to apply those measures, the CSSS can be contacted (e.g. for psychosocial support).

When the person in charge of the bedbug management plan contacts the individuals dealing with an infestation, the following information can be shared:

- A summary of the situation at school;
- A summary of the situation at home;
- Information on bedbugs:

- The pamphlet entitled "Let's Fight Bedbugs"<sup>1</sup> included in the Appendix can be handed out.
- Appropriate recommendations for tenants or owners
  - Tenants: Tell the owner that there are bedbugs as soon as possible
  - Owners<sup>2</sup>: Ask a qualified pest controller to completely eliminate the bedbugs.
- The importance of quickly putting measures in place to prevent further spread at home, and measures that can be applied at school (see Section 4).
- Steps the school will take. Ask the people whose homes are infested to keep the school informed of their situation so the school will know when to reduce or end prevention and control measures in force at school.

If the student's home is not the place infested but rather somewhere he or she goes to, tell the student or the parents to take appropriate precautions when going to this place:

- Don't put anything (coat, bag) on the beds, upholstered furniture or floor;
- Don't sit on the beds or upholstered furniture.

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<sup>1</sup> Document available in several languages: <http://avoidbedbugs.info/>

<sup>2</sup> See "Bedbugs: Identifying and Controlling Bedbugs", Guide for Building Owners, Administrators and Managers published by Direction de santé publique de l'Agence de la santé de Montréal and Ville de Montréal: <http://www.santemontreal.qc.ca/bedbugs>

## 5. HOW TO PREVENT BEDBUGS FROM SPREADING

A full extermination at home can take several weeks to several months. In the meantime, measures to prevent the spread of bedbugs at school and at home must be put in place quickly; these measures are usually enough to prevent the bugs from spreading. The student, his or her parents and the person in charge of the bedbug management plan should come to an agreement on what to do to reduce the risks that bedbugs spread from home to school. Those measures should be ended a month after the exterminator's last visit, if there are no signs of bedbugs in the environment and if the person has no new welts.

### Preventing bedbugs from spreading in the school

The person in charge of the school's bedbug management plan must identify measures to reduce the risks of bedbugs spreading in the school, based on an assessment of how the situation is being dealt with at the student's home.

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Ask the parents and student to make sure that clothes and personal belongings are free of bedbugs before leaving the house.

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In all cases, the person in charge must meet with the student or parent to go over the recommendations. Together they will agree on what to do to make sure that the student and his or her clothes, supplies and other personal belongings are free of bedbugs.

1. If there is a **confirmed case and** if the person in charge determines that the student and parents are **able to put in place the measures** to reduce the spread at home, **no additional measures are needed at school.**
2. If the person in charge determines that **the student and parents are unable** to put in place the measures to reduce the spread at home, then he or she must discuss the case with a team to set up an intervention plan in collaboration with the family and to identify measures to implement **at school**, based on an evaluation of the situation in the home. The team's composition can vary but should include the person in charge of the school's bedbug management plan and a professional from the CSSS. If the student attends the school day care, a representative from the day care service should also be included in the discussions so that the measures can also be implemented at the day care service.

If the parents are unable to apply control measures at home, some measures to reduce the spread can be implemented at school. Parents and the school must agree on these measures. Here are a few examples:

- Ideally, limit to a minimum the number of personal items the student brings to school.
- Based on the evaluation of the parents' ability to get rid of bedbugs in their home, it may be necessary to discretely inspect the student's clothes and personal belongings upon arrival at school. The inspection should be done in a room reserved for this purpose.
- If there are signs confirming the presence of bedbugs or if there are indications that there may be bedbugs on personal belongings (e.g. shoes, clothes or coat), put these items in a new, light-coloured plastic bag<sup>3</sup> Tie the bag with a knot or fasten it with a twist tie to prevent bedbugs from coming out of the bag and spreading in the school. When the student leaves the school, give back the personal belongings and immediately put the bag in a garbage bin outdoors to prevent the bugs from spreading.
- Ask the student to bring a set of clean clothes or to keep a set at school.
- Maintenance staff should be asked to periodically and more frequently check rooms where the student puts belongings to detect the presence of bedbugs and ensure that the recommended maintenance measures are used (e.g. thorough cleaning, vacuuming<sup>4</sup>). Cleaning should be done either before or after school hours to preserve the student's anonymity.



## **Bedbug Extermination at School**

Bedbug infestations (multiplication) in schools are rare because bedbugs are brought to school from elsewhere; therefore treatment is rarely required. If one or two bedbugs are spotted at school, they should be squashed. They can then be stuck on adhesive paper for identification. In very rare cases where a lot bugs are observed and infestation is suspected, it is important to act quickly and call a qualified exterminator who is licensed and certified by the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques (MDDELCC). The MDDELCC's Pesticides Management Code<sup>5</sup> imposes strict rules for the use of

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<sup>3</sup> Bedbugs can be seen more easily if the bag or container is a light colour.

<sup>4</sup> See the following section for vacuuming instructions.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.mddelcc.gouv.qc.ca/pesticides/permis-en/code-gestion-en/code-cpe.htm>

insecticides in schools, such as the requirement that pesticides be applied only outside school hours.

## **Reducing the spread at home**

If there are bedbugs at home, the building owner should take quick action and hire a qualified exterminator. **Appendix 3** outlines the steps to take for bedbug extermination in homes.

### Measures to reduce the spread of bedbugs until the infestation has been eliminated in the home of the person involved

- Vacuuming often can reduce the number of bedbugs. Tie the vacuum bag with a knot or fasten it with a twist tie right after vacuuming and put the bag in the garbage outside the home. If using a bagless vacuum, empty the contents into a plastic bag, seal it and place it outside the home immediately after use. Clean the vacuum cleaner container after each use, according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Put all clothing and bedding in the dryer and run it at high heat for at least 30 minutes.
- Cold can also kill bedbugs, but under very strict conditions:  $-18^{\circ}\text{C}$  for 3.5 days. The middle of the object or, if the objects are in a bag, the middle of the bag must reach this temperature. A refrigerator freezer does not usually reach this temperature.
- Store all bed-bug free clothing and personal belongings in a large plastic bag, seal the bag and keep it in a place other than where people sleep. Just before leaving for school, take out only the clothes and personal items needed for the day. Once back home, put all articles (e.g. coat, backpack, lunch box) likely to be brought back to school the next day in a sealed plastic bag.



Anyone living in a bedbug infested home should take the same precautions.

If the person in charge at school thinks that the parents are having trouble applying these measures, a request for help can be sent to the CSSS professional working with schools or to psychosocial services at the CSSS, depending on the family's needs.

## **6. SUMMARY – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Bedbug management in schools is effective when everyone works together. Parents, the school and the health network all have roles to play to control this problem.

### **Parents**

Parents have several responsibilities when dealing with a bedbug problem at home.

Parents should

- quickly implement the necessary measures to eliminate bedbugs in their home;
- notify the school if they have bedbugs. If they have children in another school or day care service, notify those establishments also;
- limit the spread of bedbugs from their home to the school;
- let the school know once extermination is complete.

### **School**

Schools are responsible for prevention and control of bedbugs on their premises.

The school should

- designate a staff member to be in charge of the bedbug management plan;
- set up a bedbug prevention and control action plan;
- provide information about bedbugs to all staff members;
- give out information about bedbugs to families of students with bedbug infestations so they can resolve the problem;
- identify and put in place measures to reduce spread in the school;
- inform students and parents about measures to take at home to reduce the spread;
- provide follow-up for students who are dealing with infestations until the problem is solved.

### **Health network (CSSS and public health)**

Professionals from the health network help schools set up action plans or work with schools when cases are more complex.

With the support of public health and upon request, CSSS professionals will

- help schools develop and implement bedbug prevention and control plans;
- provide training and information material on bedbugs;

- support families dealing with special situations via the CSSS professional assigned to the school or the psychosocial services at the CSSS.

The roles of tenants, owners and exterminators are outlined in *Bedbugs: Identifying and Controlling Bedbugs*, published by Direction de santé publique de Montréal and Ville de Montréal. The Guide is for building owners, administrators and managers<sup>6</sup>.

## 7. USEFUL REFERENCES

### **For more information about bedbugs**

- Ville de Montréal: [www.avoidbedbugs.info](http://www.avoidbedbugs.info)
- Direction de santé publique du CIUSSS du Centre-Sud-de l'Île-de-Montréal: <http://www.santemontreal.qc.ca/bedbugs>
- Gouvernement du Québec, Portail santé mieux-être: <http://sante.gouv.qc.ca/en/problemes-de-sante/punaises-de-lit/>
- Direction de santé publique de l'Estrie, Conseils utiles pour se préparer à l'extermination: [http://www.santeestrie.qc.ca/sante\\_publicque/protection\\_sante\\_environmentale/environnement\\_interieur/documents/Feuilleet\\_Punaises-MaJ-02-2015.pdf](http://www.santeestrie.qc.ca/sante_publicque/protection_sante_environmentale/environnement_interieur/documents/Feuilleet_Punaises-MaJ-02-2015.pdf)

### **Questions about health**

- Info-Santé: 8-1-1

### **Information about the toxic effects of pesticides and insecticides**

- Québec Poison Control Centre: 1-800-463-5060

### **Support for schools**

- Direction de santé publique du CIUSSS or your regional CISSS: <http://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/en/reseau/agences.php>
- Health and Social Service Centre (CSSS) <http://sante.gouv.qc.ca/en/repertoire-ressources/votre-csss/>

### **Municipal inspection services**

- City of Montréal: 3-1-1
- Inspection services are only available in some municipalities. Contact your municipality.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.santemontreal.qc.ca/bedbugs>



**Advice on tenants' rights**

- Régie du logement: <http://www.rdl.gouv.qc.ca/en/accueil/accueil.asp>  
Montréal, Laval and Longueuil: 514-873-2245  
Other regions: 1-800-683-2245
- Regroupement des comités logement et association de locataires du Québec (RCLALQ):  
[www.rclalq.qc.ca](http://www.rclalq.qc.ca)  
Montréal: 514-521-7114  
Other regions: 1-866-521-7114 (toll free)

## **8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## Appendix 1: Bedbug Interview Grid and Follow-up Grid<sup>7</sup>

### Initial Interview Grid

Name of the person completing the interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of initial interview (dd/mm/yyyy): \_\_\_\_\_

#### General information about the student

First name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last name: \_\_\_\_\_

Group: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone no.: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone no.: \_\_\_\_\_

Father's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone no.: \_\_\_\_\_

Brother or sister:  Yes  No

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Group: \_\_\_\_\_

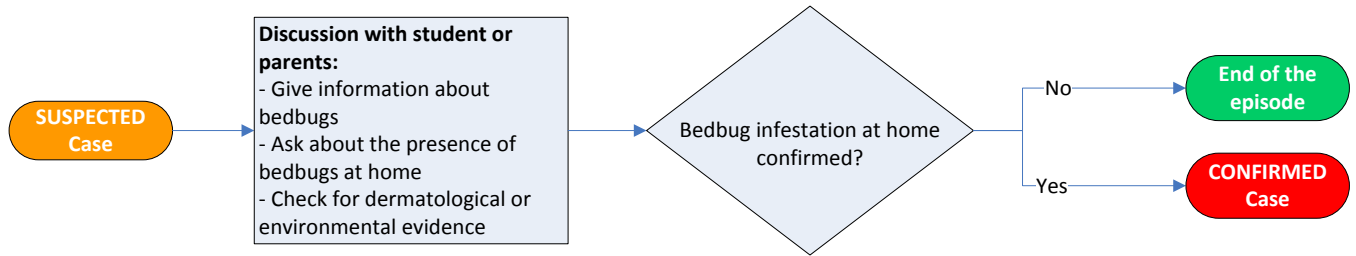
#### Case identification

First determine if the case is suspected or confirmed.

\_\_\_\_\_

<sup>7</sup> NOTE: Completed interview grids must be kept confidential in the school.

**A. Suspected case**



Dermatological evidence on the individual (e.g. bites)?  Yes  No

Note: Bedbug bites can resemble other skin problems (e.g. other bug bites, eczema) and do not confirm that there are bedbugs at the student's home.

Site of bites on the body:  hands  arms  ankles  legs  neck

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Environmental evidence (e.g. insects) on clothing or personal items?  Yes  No

Has the child or parents confirmed there are bedbugs at home?  Yes  No

Don't know

Decision regarding follow-up

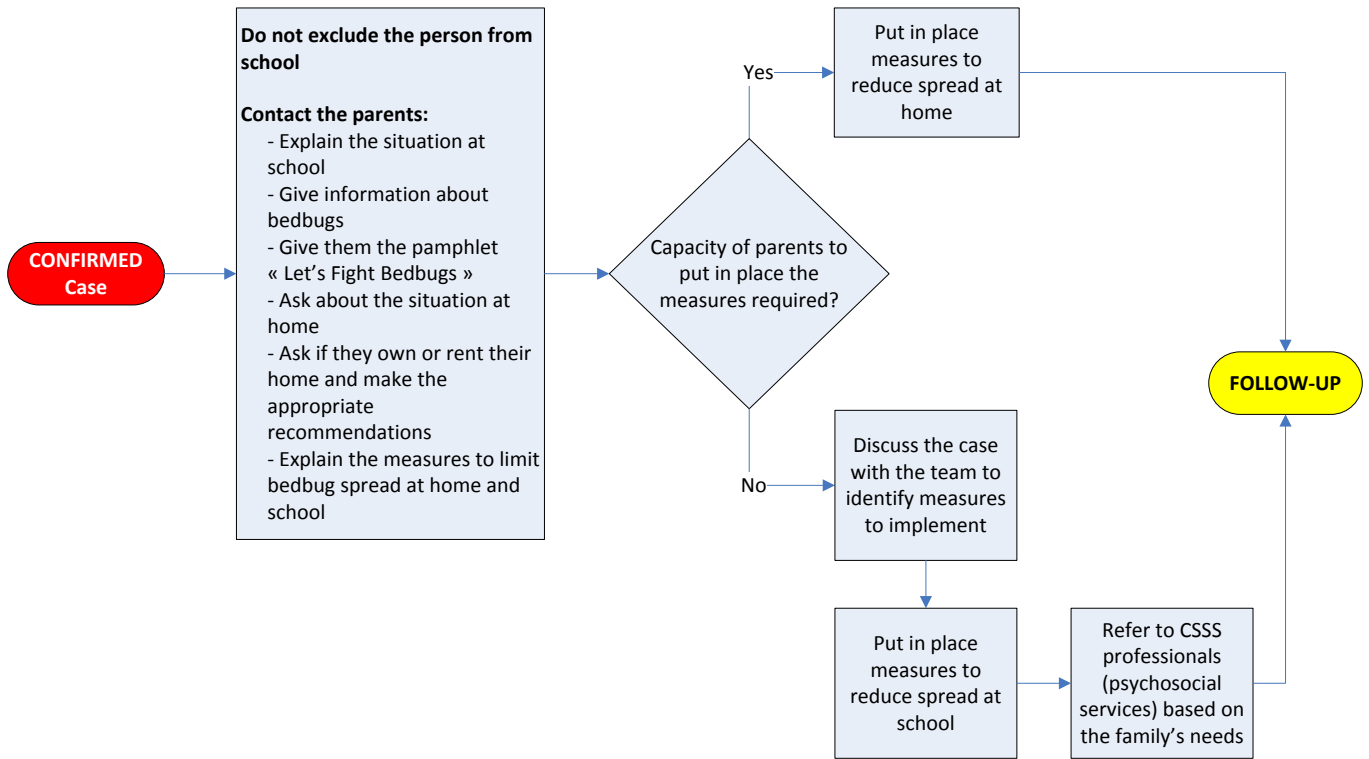
Confirmation that there is a bedbug infestation at home?  Yes  No

Dermatological AND environmental evidence repeatedly observed?  Yes  No

If you have answered YES to one of the two preceding questions, go to Section B.

If you have answered NO to both questions, end of follow-up.

**B. Confirmed case**



Evaluation of the situation at home

Date contacted: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent contacted: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone no.: \_\_\_\_\_

Do the parents  own or  rent?

If the parents are owners:

- Have they contacted an exterminator?  Yes  No

If the parents are tenants:

- Has the owner been informed that there are bedbugs in their home?  Yes  No
- How? (verbally, telephone call, email, letter, registered letter):

- If the owner has refused, has the municipality been contacted<sup>8</sup>?  
 Yes  No
- Has the Régie du logement been contacted?  Yes  No

Has the home been treated?  Yes  No

Planned date? \_\_\_\_\_ Actual date? \_\_\_\_\_

Has a second treatment been planned or completed?  Yes  No

Planned date? \_\_\_\_\_ Actual date? \_\_\_\_\_

Has a third treatment been planned or completed?  Yes  No

Planned date? \_\_\_\_\_ Actual date? \_\_\_\_\_

Are there still bedbugs at home?  Yes  No

**If there are bedbugs at home, the parents and student must apply measures to reduce the spread at home.**

Reducing the spread of bedbugs at home

Have clothing and bedding been put in the dryer at high heat for at least 30 minutes?  Yes

No  To come (the person has committed to doing it)

Has bed-bug free clothing been put into large plastic bags that are hermetically sealed?  Yes

No  To do

Are the student's clothes taken out of the bag every day just before leaving for school and the bag resealed?  Yes  No  To come

When the student returns home, are backpack, lunch box and any other item that travel back and forth to school stored in a well-sealed plastic bag?  Yes  No  To come

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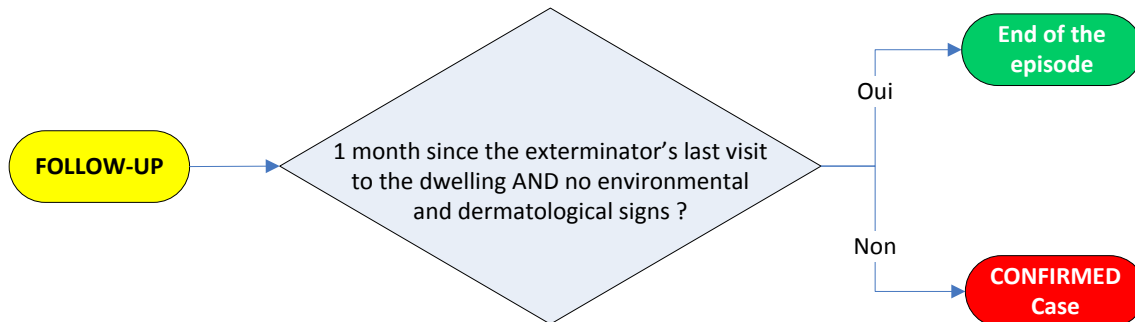
<sup>8</sup> For instance, to reach the City of Montréal's inspection services, call 311.







## Follow-up Grid



Date of first extermination (dd/mm/yyyy): \_\_\_\_\_

Date of second extermination (dd/mm/yyyy): \_\_\_\_\_

1 month after the exterminator's last visit (dd/mm/yyyy) (minimum of 2 visits):

Planned date: \_\_\_\_\_ Confirmed date: \_\_\_\_\_

Are there still bedbugs at home?  Yes  No

If Yes: Continue follow-up      If No: Episode ended

Date of end of episode: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of third extermination (dd/mm/yyyy): \_\_\_\_\_

1 month after the exterminator's last visit (dd/mm/yyyy):

Planned date: \_\_\_\_\_ Confirmed date: \_\_\_\_\_

Are there still bedbugs at home?  Yes  No

If Yes: Continue follow-up      If No: Episode ended

Date of end of episode: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## **APPENDIX 2: Form letter for parents**

(Insert the school logo or name)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Re: Presence of Bedbugs**

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Dear Sir or Madam,

We are writing to inform you that we have found bedbugs at school. Although schools are not typical places for bed bugs to spread, we have quickly put in place prevention and control measures.

Bedbugs are brownish, oval-shaped, flat insects that have no wings. They are 4 to 7 millimetres long and visible to the naked eye. They look like flattened apple seeds. They feed on human blood and are mainly active at night. Bedbugs do not spread diseases. Their bites can cause itching similar to mosquito bites. Unlike lice, bedbugs do not live on people but travel from one place to another by hiding on people's personal items.

Keep a watchful eye. If you see bedbugs in your home, you must contact a qualified exterminator so he can apply pesticides. If you're a tenant, you must quickly inform the owner so he or she can have your home exterminated. Also, please notify the school promptly.

For more information, see the information sheet included with this letter or visit the following Websites: [santemontreal.qc.ca/bedbugs](http://santemontreal.qc.ca/bedbugs) or [avoidbedbugs.info](http://avoidbedbugs.info). You can also call Info-Santé à 811, or talk to your doctor.

Do not hesitate to contact the school administration for additional information.

Regards,

School administration

Encl.: Pamphlet on bedbugs



# LET'S FIGHT BEDBUGS

Any type of home, whether luxurious or modest, clean or unsanitary, can be a haven for bedbugs. There is no need to be embarrassed if these bugs end up moving in with you. The important thing is to act fast in order to eliminate them.

## WHAT IS A BEDBUG?

- Adult bedbugs are insects the size and colour of an apple seed.
- They bite humans at night to feed on their blood.
- Bedbug bites look like mosquito bites.
- They avoid light and usually hide in bedrooms, close to the bed and along the seams of the mattress.
- Bedbugs do not fly or jump on people. They move around by walking.



## WHAT ARE THE HEALTH HAZARDS ASSOCIATED WITH BEDBUGS?

- Bedbugs do not transmit diseases.
- Their bites can cause itching.
- Skin infections can result from scratching the bites.
- Bedbugs can cause several problems, such as sleep disruption, anxiety and social isolation.

## HOW TO DETECT THEM

If you do not see bedbugs, look for the following clues:

- Insect bites similar to mosquito bites
- Itchy skin
- Black dots on mattress seams
- Small blood stains on sheets and mattress seams



## HOW THEY SPREAD

- By travelling between apartments in a building
- By being carried in various objects:
  - Suitcases, handbags, clothing, etc.
  - Furniture, especially mattresses and upholstered furniture, such as armchairs and sofas

## HOW TO PREVENT A BEDBUG INFESTATION

Never bring home mattresses or furniture found outside such as sofas, armchairs, sofa beds or futons, even if they appear to be in good condition, because they might harbour bedbugs.

If you bring home second-hand clothes:

- Place them in a plastic bag and close the bag tightly before bringing it into your home.
- Empty the contents of the bag directly into the dryer and run the dryer on the highest setting for at least 30 minutes to kill the bedbugs and their eggs.
- Throw the empty bag in the garbage outdoors.

If you buy used furniture:

- Carefully inspect and clean it before bringing it into your building.
- Avoid second-hand mattresses or upholstered furniture.

## HOW TO GET RID OF INFESTED MATTRESSES OR FURNITURE

If the exterminator asks you to make them unusable, slash the fabric or destroy them. Enclose mattresses in large plastic bags before taking them out of your dwelling (free large bags available at Accès Montréal offices).

Helpful tips for preventing and controlling bedbug infestations

## EXTERMINATION

Tenants are responsible for notifying their landlord without delay when they find bedbugs in their home.

## PREPARING THE HOME FOR THE EXTERMINATOR

To ensure the success of the extermination, tenants must cooperate with their landlord and closely follow the exterminator's guidelines, such as:

- Empty closets and chests of drawers. Put all clothing, bedding (sheets, mattress covers, blankets, bedspreads) and curtains in the dryer and run on the highest setting for at least 30 minutes to kill any bedbugs and their eggs.
- Store all clothing, bedding and curtains in tightly closed plastic bags until the extermination has been completed.
- Remove clutter to facilitate the exterminator's job.
- Vacuum everywhere in the home, including under the furniture, inside closets, on baseboards, etc. Empty the contents of the vacuum into a plastic bag, close the bag tightly and throw it in the garbage outdoors.
- Check with the exterminator before getting rid of mattresses and upholstered furniture. If they are in good condition, they can be treated.
- Don't bring home new furniture until the extermination is completely finished.

To ensure successful extermination of bedbugs, cooperation between the tenant, the landlord and the exterminator is key.

## TENANT'S RESPONSIBILITY

The tenant must:

- Call the landlord or the building manager without delay after spotting bedbugs.
- Contact a representative from the Division des permis et des inspections for the borough by calling 311, if the landlord doesn't take action.
- Give the exterminator access to all the rooms in the home.
- Keep the home clean and clutter-free.
- Follow the exterminator's recommendations.

**Caution: Don't try to solve the problem yourself. Don't use insecticides or other products sold over the counter: they may harm your health and make the bedbugs harder to eliminate.**

## LANDLORD'S RESPONSIBILITY

When notified about bedbugs, the landlord must:

- Take action to correct the problem.
- Hire an exterminator in order to completely eradicate all bedbugs in the building.
- Enable the exterminator to visit all the common areas, all the apartments adjacent to the one where bedbugs were found and, if the exterminator thinks it is necessary, any other apartment in order to eliminate the problem throughout the building.

## EXTERMINATOR'S RESPONSIBILITY

The exterminator must:

- Make every effort to detect bedbugs throughout every room of the apartment and in all the adjacent apartments and, if he thinks it is necessary, in any other apartment.
- Make sure to destroy bedbugs at all stages of development. This requires the exterminator to return at least once after the initial treatment to check if all the bedbugs have been eliminated.
- Avoid using insecticides needlessly. Mattresses and upholstered furniture can usually be treated with hot steam.
- Hold a permit from the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques and use certified technicians.

## FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

[avoidbedbugs.info](http://avoidbedbugs.info)  
or call 311

Produced by the Ville de Montréal ([ville.montreal.qc.ca](http://ville.montreal.qc.ca)), the Direction de santé publique at the Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de Montréal ([santemontreal.qc.ca](http://santemontreal.qc.ca)) and the Office municipal d'habitation de Montréal ([omhm.qc.ca](http://omhm.qc.ca))

## APPENDIX 3: Extermination in homes

If there are bedbugs at home:

### If you are an owner

- 1- Ask a qualified exterminator (certified and holding a permit from the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques) to proceed with the extermination. Effective control methods are presented in a guide for building owners.<sup>9</sup>

### If you are a tenant

- 1- Quickly inform the owner, verbally and then in writing, that there are bedbugs in your home. Describe the problem and ask that the owner take rapid action. Give the owner the pamphlet entitled *Let's Fight Bedbugs (in the appendix)*. Make sure you send a written letter (by registered mail) so you can get a notice of delivery, and keep a copy of the correspondence.

*Note: It is the owner's responsibility to make sure that the exterminator has eliminated the bedbugs throughout the building. The owner has to provide access to all apartments, common areas, basements, attics, etc.*

- 2- If the owner of your building doesn't take action within a reasonable time (maximum 10 days) following receipt of your letter:
  - Send a request to the municipality's inspection services.<sup>10</sup> Include copies of the correspondence and proof (e.g. photos), if available.

*Note: In some cases, municipalities can assure housing sanitation in their territory as long as there are municipal bylaws<sup>11</sup> that cover nuisances or unsanitary conditions. A municipality's evaluation of the situation in its territory and of its capacity to provide support and manage such occurrences can vary.*

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<sup>9</sup> See "Bedbugs: Identifying and Controlling Bedbugs", Guide for Building Owners, Administrators and Managers published by Direction de santé publique de l'Agence de la santé de Montréal and Ville de Montréal: <http://www.santemontreal.qc.ca/bedbugs>

<sup>10</sup> For instance, to reach the City of Montréal's inspection services, call 311.

<sup>11</sup> [www.mamrot.gouv.qc.ca/amenagement-du-territoire/guide-la-prise-de-decision-en-urbanisme/protection-de-lenvironnement/reglements-sur-lenvironnement-la-salubrite-la-securite-et-les-nuisances/](http://www.mamrot.gouv.qc.ca/amenagement-du-territoire/guide-la-prise-de-decision-en-urbanisme/protection-de-lenvironnement/reglements-sur-lenvironnement-la-salubrite-la-securite-et-les-nuisances/)

- If there is no inspection service, contact the Régie du logement du Québec.<sup>12</sup> If the owner of your building refuses to follow-up on your request and correct the situation, more detailed information on what you can do (formal notice, filing a request) is available at the Régie du logement's regional offices.
- You can also ask for help from a community organization such as your regional tenants' rights group. Contact the Regroupement des comités logement et association de locataires du Québec (RCLALQ) to find out about the tenants' rights committee in your area<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.rdl.gouv.qc.ca/en/accueil/accueil.asp>

<sup>13</sup> [www.rclalq.qc.ca](http://www.rclalq.qc.ca)





**Centre intégré  
universitaire de santé  
et de services sociaux  
du Centre-Sud-  
de-l'île-de-Montréal**

**Québec** 