North Monterey County Unified School District

Health Services ♦ (831) 633-5221 ext. 3394 ♦ Fax: (831) 633-2520 ♦ 13990 Castroville Blvd. ♦ Castroville, California 95012

BED BUGS FACT SHEET

DEFINITION

Bedbugs are insects that feed on human blood. Unlike head lice, they do not live on a person. They are usually active at night while people sleep. There is no evidence that bed bugs transmit disease. However, they can cause itching, anxiety and lack of sleep. Once a bedroom has bedbugs, they can be difficult to control. Getting rid of bedbugs can be expensive.

CHARACTERISTICS

Newly hatched bed bugs are almost colorless and hard to see. Fully grown, they are visible as brownish, flat insects about the size of an apple seed. They usually hide in crevices of beds, box springs, mattresses, headboards and bed frames. Other hiding places are: cracks of floors, under carpeting near baseboards, under peeling paint and loose wallpaper, and seams of upholstered furniture. Although bedbugs can hitchhike from one place to another in clothing, luggage, backpacks, and books, they are rare in the school setting. This is because they usually hide during the day and come out only at night to feed.

CAUSE of INCREASED BED BUG PROBLEM

The increase in infestations may be due to increased international travel, changed pest control practices or insecticide resistance.

HOW BED BUGS ARE SPREAD

Bed bugs usually do not stay on a person after a meal. They often hide in clothes or luggage left on the floor. Bed bugs are equally successful in a clean or dirty environment. All they need is a warm person and plenty of hiding places. Bed bugs are more commonly found in places that are crowded and have a high turnover of people, such as: hotels, military barracks, homeless shelters, apartment complexes, and refugee camps.

CONTROL IN SCHOOL

Bed bug infestations in schools are very uncommon. If a bedbug is found on a student or adult, that person could have bed bugs at home, or it was brought to school by someone else and crawled onto another person. Students and staff members are not to be excluded from school if a bed bug is found. Notify the parent of the student. Clean the hard surfaces of the classroom.

HOME MANAGEMENT

<u>When to suspect bedbugs:</u>

- Having itchy bug bites is not enough to suspect bed bugs, as bed bug bites are similar to mosquito and other insect bites. Bed bug bites are arranged in a rough line or in a cluster, often on someone's face, neck, arms and hands. If a person has this pattern and small bugs have been seen in places where he/she sleeps, then suspect bed bugs.
- Contact your child's physician if there is a severe skin reaction to any type of bite (eg severe itching, blisters or hives)

<u>If you think you have bedbugs in your home.</u>

- Contact a professional pest control exterminator. Or contact your landlord if you rent an apartment or similar arrangement.
- Vacuum the house thoroughly.
- Wash clothes and other washable items in hot water. Items that will tolerate heat may also be placed in a clothes dryer that is set at medium or high heat for 20 minutes.

<u>Prevention</u>

- Inspect second hand items such as mattresses or upholstered furniture before bringing them into your home.
- Never bring discarded mattresses, box springs, bed frames or upholstered furniture into your home.
- When staying at hotels, check mattress seams for bed bug excrement. Place luggage on table or dressers, not on floor.
- Wash clothing and bedding as soon as your return from a trip.