

Long Term, Nursing, and Assisted Living Facilities

Hospitals

Most hospital environments are not conducive to bed bug infestations. Rooms are designed to discourage harborage of potentially infectious pathogens and surfaces are cleaned regularly. Furniture is typically metal and rooms are sparsely furnished and free of clutter, for ease of cleaning. It is possible that a patient could bring bed bugs into a hospital in their belongings. These are typically transient introductions and infestation is unlikely to result in a modern setting. If a hospital suspects a bed bug infestation, they should contact a licensed pest management professional for assistance.

Long-Term Care Facilities

Long-term care, nursing and assisted living facilities face special challenges when it comes to dealing with bed bugs. Residents often have limited mobility and may have physical or mental health difficulties that make it difficult or impossible to communicate that they are being bitten. Furthermore, residents may be hesitant to report bed bug concerns for fear of being stigmatized or evicted. Therefore, it is critical that these facilities be especially vigilant for any signs of bed bugs.

Sleeping rooms and common areas should be regularly inspected for bed bugs. See the [Inspection section](#) for specific information what to look for. Bedding can also be checked for signs of infestation when it is changed. In long-term care facilities, many patients use wheelchairs, or motorized cars for movement. These items can become infested by bed bugs and spread them to common areas or other resident's rooms. Be aware that these items should also be inspected carefully if bed bugs are suspected.

Staff who assist residents with bathing should be trained to look for and report skin lesions. There are a number of skin conditions that can affect people in long-term care settings, including MRSA (methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*), scabies, and pressure sores. Bed bug bites should be considered when a patient is experiencing inflammatory lesions in which other causes have been ruled out and typical treatments have failed.

Intake evaluations for new residents should include bed bug screening. Facilities should be very cautious about allowing residents to bring in their own furniture. If the facility allows outside furniture to be brought in, the items should be inspected to ensure that they are bed-bug free. Shared equipment like wheelchairs, trays, and carts should be stored away from sleeping areas and should be disinfected between uses.

If a bed bug infestation is suspected in a long-term care facility, it is vitally important that the facility contact a licensed pest management professional immediately. The longer an infestation is allowed to develop, the more difficult it can be to eradicate. The pest management professional should conduct a thorough inspection and work with the facility management to develop a treatment plan. Because it may not be practical to relocate the affected residents, treatment strategies should conform to an [Integrated Pest Management](#) plan so as to minimize exposure to pesticides.

When an infestation is confirmed, it is important to be sensitive to the concerns of affected residents. Residents may feel ashamed and may not want others to know that they are having a problem with bed bugs. These concerns will have to be balanced with the need to control the infestation. Reassure residents that the bed bug infestation is not their fault, and that bed bugs are not indicative of poor hygiene or housekeeping. With the resident's consent, notify family members and other regular visitors that bed bugs have been found in the facility, and provide them with educational materials so that they can check for bed bugs in their own homes.

In these instances, investigative work may also be helpful to determine whether visitors to the facility may be bringing bed bugs in. The point of this exercise is not to place blame, but to educate, control, and prevent bed bugs from being introduced again. If a resident's room is continuously infested after treatment attempts, the bed bugs may be being brought in by visitors. There is also a possibility they may be coming from an adjacent unit. Education and evaluation of visitors, and inspection and treatment (if necessary) of adjacent units will help to prevent infestations.

Staff, residents, and family members are encouraged to report bed bug infestations promptly to facility management. Educate yourself, staff, and residents using this guide. If the problem persists, complaints can be made to the Michigan Department of Community Health Bureau of Health Systems at 1-800-882-6006.