

| West Neighbourhood House | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Policy Title: | Transmissible Skin Diseases and Bug Infestations (Bed Bug Policy) |
| Approved By: | Management |
| Approval Date: | December 2008 |
| Revision Date: | October 2015 / April 2026 / |

West Neighbourhood House will strive to reduce the risk of bed bug transmission to staff, participants, students, community members and volunteers through the implementation of House-wide procedures.

This policy applies to all areas of West Neighbourhood House where services are provided including participant's homes, other community agencies, and community settings etc. All staff, students, volunteers who have direct and frequent direct contact with participants play a key role in the early identification and prevention of bed bug transmission and infestation.

This policy outlines the role of management, staff, students, and volunteers in reporting, responding, and implementing strategies to reduce bed bug transmission and infestation. While this policy refers mainly to bed bugs, a similar approach will be taken with other types of bug infestations and transmissible skin diseases (eg. scabies and lice).

Procedures

1. Reporting Responsibilities

All staff, students, and volunteers must report the following circumstances regarding bed bugs to their supervisor **that same day**, within the context of service delivery:

- any bed bug sightings or marks from bites
- potential bed bug sightings (if not able to accurately identify the type of bug)
- participant reports that he or she has bed bugs
- staff suspects that the participant has bed bugs

Also, staff, volunteers, and students must report to their supervisor and respective Unit Director or designate, if they suspect or see signs of bed bugs in their own homes, **immediately**. The privacy of staff, volunteers, and student placements will be protected as much as possible. Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis. Measures will be quickly implemented to prevent and manage further transmission and infestation. The supervisor will continue to be available for ongoing discussion and support for the individual.

2. Service Delivery

If, during the course of delivering services, a staff or volunteer confirms a bed bug sighting, they will respond in the following way:

- Make available to the individual resources to help deal with bed bugs

- Work with their supervisor to develop a strategy for providing ongoing services to the individual, in a way that reduces the risk of transmission of bed bugs.
- Depending on the program, participants may have their services put on hold or may be requested to leave West Neighbourhood House property until bed bug infestation is resolved. If it is not possible to resolve the bed bug infestation and service delivery must continue it may be limited to essential services.
- All staff responsible for delivering services during this time will be informed of the situation, trained on how to reduce transmission, and be provided with protective disposable gowns, booties, and other preventative measures.

3. Returning to West Neighbourhood House Programs

When to return to West Neighbourhood House Programs will be determined on a case-by-case basis depending on the nature of the condition and timing of contagion. Every effort will be made to work with individuals in a trusting relationship to help resolve the problem so that they can return to participate in West Neighbourhood House.

Staff will provide support individuals, as appropriate to the program. This may include, making follow-up calls and alternate arrangements, advocacy to housing providers, and discussing strategies to reduce transmission.

4. In-Kind Donations

Generally, in-kind donations such as clothing, furniture, books, and stuffed toys are not accepted at West Neighbourhood House. The Coordinator of Community Relations should be contacted about any donations to the West Neighbourhood House.

Recommended Strategies to Reduce Transmission

It is recommended that staff, students, and volunteers who may be exposed to bed bugs or are at high risk for exposure implement the following strategies to reduce the risk of bringing bed bugs home or into the workplace.

- When returning home from work, put all of your clothes into a plastic bag and have a new set of clothes ready to change into. Seal the plastic bag and carry it to a clothes dryer. Put the bag in the dryer and take the clothes out of the plastic bag. Turn on the clothes dryer for 20 minutes and discard the sealed bag.
- Check bedroom furniture regularly for signs of bed bugs to avoid a more serious infestation.
- Be informed of what bed bugs look like, signs that bed bugs are present, what can be done to reduce bed bug transmission, and what to do to eradicate bed bugs.

Additional References

[*A Handbook for Shelter Operators, Toronto Shelter, Support & Housing Administration*](#)
[*Bedbugs Factsheet, City of Toronto*](#)