

CGCDPH Bed Bug Education Plan

July 1, 2016

Created as a final step in a Quality Improvement Project by the Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health to address bed bugs where they arise; in the community.

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# Why is education about bed bug important?

Limited knowledge and awareness of bed bugs is a barrier that impacts a community’s ability to eradicate bed bugs. Likewise, insufficient outreach and education occurs in many communities. The purpose of education related to bed bugs is to empower community members to prevent bed bug infestations and the spread of existing infestations. Studies related to similar health problems prove education is imperative to pest management.

# Introduction

Bed bugs have been increasing steadily since the early 2000’s, mostly due to lack of effective insecticides and travel. The bed bug epidemic is real and affects every state in the United States1. Bed bugs are resilient pests that feed on human blood. They are small insects that hide well and reproduce rapidly in ideal settings. Prevention is a critical component of addressing this public health problem. Likewise, quick detection and proper treatment needs to occur to limit the spreading of bed bugs infestations. Education and communication for the public, community leaders, and all stakeholders is a principal step in tackling the local bed bug problem2.

The purpose of this plan is to guide internal and external educational efforts with the goal of decreasing the overall prevalence of bed bugs and exposure to bed bugs in Cerro Gordo County.

# Who needs bed bug education?

Although certain agencies and sectors in our community may be more at-risk when it comes to being exposed to bed bugs, *bed bug education is important for everyone.* Bed bugs do not discriminate nor are they associated with filth, meaning anyone and everyone is at-risk to be affected by bed bugs. Those working in the housing sector to include those visiting homes frequently (i.e. social care workers, police officers, etc.) are excellent candidates for bed bugs education. Likewise other target populations include: schools (faculty, staff, custodial staff, and parents/students), medical personnel, landlords and tenants (especially in chronically infested multi-family complexes), senior living centers, home inspectors, and others.

# Education Options

Written materials and visuals (i.e. factsheets, posters, brochures, websites)

* Distribute directly to community members, tenants, or community organizations
* Post as online resources
* Post in public places to raise awareness and dispel myths about bed bugs
* Individuals can refer back to written information if they have it

Videos

* Educational videos can be posted online and easily shared electronically

Group Training (i.e. presentations)

* Time-effective and cost-effective3
* Reaches multiple residents or groups of individuals
* Stigma can discourage homeowners or tenants from attending

### One-on-One

* Discussion can be individualized to the specific situation or infestation
* Can be conducted via telephone allowing for anonymity, if preferred
* Hotlines are becoming a more popular way of allowing for this type of education

# Education Challenges:

Main challenges can include4:

* Stigma and fear surrounding bed bugs
* Low literacy levels
* Language barriers

# Bed Bug Education Tips

* Use color pictures on printed materials of what bed bugs look like
* Use visuals often for those with low literacy
* Do not rely on everyone to read information given to them; discuss one-on-one when able to
* Explain the presence of misinformation and misconceptions of bed bugs (even among professionals) similar to other health topics.

# Main Education Topics

* Bed Bug Biology and Behaviors What bed bugs look like, how they feed, and how they commonly travel with people.
* Early detection Including how to identify a bed bug and differentiate between them and other household pests. Cover common hiding places.
* Bed Bug Myths Common myths to address by the idea that bed bugs live on our bodies, cannot be seen, or can effectively be treated with retail-store pesticides.
* Bed Bug Treatment and Control Roles and responsibilities regarding bed bug management and control (specifically for property owners, tenants, and pest control companies). Review various integrated pest management approaches.
* Resources available

# Internal Bed Bug Education at the Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health

* Internal Bed Bug Protocol designed as a guide and resource for CGCDPH field staff
* CGCDPH home care aide staff and home nurses required bi-annual trainings related to bed bugs and new updates/research. The trainings are conducted by the CGCDPH Healthy Homes Program Coordinator.
* Information sent periodically through the CGCDPH Communicator Newsletter via e-mail to employees

# External Bed Bug Education in the Community

* Information and flyers posted at [www.cghealth.com](http://www.cghealth.com) 🡪 “A-Z” 🡪 Bed Bugs
* Press releases to be distributed through mass media (Examples: various radio stations, KIMT, North Iowa Today, etc.)
* Community informational sessions and training sessions for professionals presented by the CGCDPH Healthy Homes Program Coordinator
* Bed Bug Awareness Week posts shared via CGCDPH social media accounts (i.e. Facebook, Twitter)
* One-on-one education conducted via phone or in-person at the health department
* Information shared periodically through CGCDPH Communicator Newsletter with subscribers

CLIENT EDUCATION & RESOURCES:

Healthcare Facilities & Medical Professionals

* Bed Bugs in Health Care Settings <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/10.1086/668029.pdf?_=1466528093297>
* Bed Bugs: Clinical Relevance & Control Options <http://cmr.asm.org/content/25/1/164.full.pdf>

Local Health Departments and Agencies:

* Tackling Bed Bugs: A Starter Guide for Local Governments <http://npic.orst.edu/pest/bedbug/tacklingbbstarterguide.pdf>
* EPA Clearing House (Resources to Share) <https://www.epa.gov/bedbugs/bed-bug-clearinghouse-publications-other-languages>

Schools:

* Bed Bug Action Plan for Schools: <http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/pdf/bb-schools1.pdf>
* <https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/documents/BB_in_Schools_May_2012.pdf>

Landlords/Property Managers/Tenants:

* Bed Bug Action Plan for Apartments: <http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/pdf/bb-apt1.pdf>
* Four Steps to Bed Bug Free Premises for Landlords Webinar: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NvfnwxgtgS8>
* RUTGERS: Bed Bug Poster for Multi-Unit Dwellings: <https://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/pdfs/bed-bug-poster-for-multi-unit-dwellings.pdf>

Public:

* <http://cghealth.com/topics/bed-bugs/>
* <http://cghealth.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Bed-bugs-Flyer.pdf>
* <http://cghealth.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Bed-Bugs-Myths-Factsheet.pdf>
* Bed Bugs How to Protect Yourself and Your Home: <http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/ENTO/ENTO-31/ENTO-31-PDF.pdf>

Housing Professionals & Professionals in the Home:

* Bed Bug Action Plan for Health Care Workers and Social Workers: <http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/pdf/bb-healthcare1.pdf>

ALL Audiences:

* EPA Bed Bug Clearing House: <https://www.epa.gov/bedbugs/bed-bug-clearinghouse-audience>

#### References:

#### Bed Bugs Epidemic in the United States

#### <http://www.omicsonline.org/open-access/bed-bugs-epidemic-in-the-united-states.2161-0983.1000143.pdf>

#### Collaborative Strategy on Bed Bugs-2015 <https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-02/documents/fed-strategy-bedbug-2015.pdf>

#### Interstate Reality Management Company: Bed Bug Education <https://themichaelsorg.com/uploads/files/343144550674878774-chapter-30-4-bed-bug-education-for-management-and-maintenance.pdf>

#### Tackling Bed Bugs: A Starter Guide for Local Governments <http://npic.orst.edu/pest/bedbug/tacklingbbstarterguide.pdf>