

Camp & Bed Bugs: Packing for Prevention

Whether they come to camp every year or this is their first trip, attending camp is an exciting time for children. Making new friends, exploring nature, and trying new things are all part of the camp experience and create memories that will last a lifetime.

However, along with all the good parts of camp, a pesky little bug can also be part of the experience. In recent years, bed bugs have made a resurgence in North America. They are often found in hotels, multi-unit dwellings, and other structures that house people for short periods of time, such as camps. While bed bugs may be a nuisance, they do not transmit disease to people.

The good news is that there are simple steps that can be taken to help ensure that children do not bring bed bugs to camp or back home. We are taking proactive steps in our camp facilities, please help us by following the packing advice listed below:

PACKING FOR CAMP

- ✓ **Visually inspect items for bugs.** Take sleeping bags, blankets, and luggage out of storage, place them outdoors, and inspect them carefully for any signs of bugs or eggs.
- ✓ **Tumble bedding and luggage in clothes dryer.** Place bedding or luggage in the clothes dryer and tumble them on a high heat setting for 30 minutes. The heat from the dryer kills bed bugs and eggs. For items that cannot be placed in a dryer, vacuuming or cleaning with soap and water or alcohol based cleaning products will kill bed bugs.
- ✓ **Use a heavy gauge garbage bag as a liner in luggage.** Place all clothing inside the liner and tightly twist and knot to seal. This will help keep bed bugs out of clothing. In addition, place bedding in a separate garbage bag. Duffle bags are recommended as luggage for campers as they can be placed in a dryer.
- ✓ **Pack extra garbage bags.** Be sure to pack two extra garbage bags for your child. One bag will be used for all dirty clothing and the other will be used for dirty bedding.
- ✓ **Repellents.** Children should use insect repellent during the day to protect against mosquitoes and ticks. Repellents should not be used while sleeping. To protect a child's belongings from bed bugs, products containing permethrin which are labeled for use on fabrics can be applied to backpacks, duffel bags, and the outside of sleeping bags. Always follow the label directions when applying permethrin products.

COMING HOME FROM CAMP

- ✓ **Inspect items before you bring them indoors.** Inspect items that cannot be placed in a washer/dryer for evidence of bed bugs outdoors and clean if necessary before bringing them indoors. Place bedding and clothes stored in garbage bags directly into the washer/dryer. Dispose of the plastic bag outdoors.
- ✓ **Clean all camp items.** For items that can be laundered, use a hot water setting and tumble dry on high heat for at least 30 minutes. For items that cannot be laundered, such as suitcases, vacuuming or cleaning with soap and water or alcohol based cleaning products are other options.
- ✓ **Wipe off shoes.** Use rubbing alcohol or soap and water to wipe off the bottoms of shoes.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact us at (269) 721 -8161
For more information, please visit <http://www.michigan.gov/bedbugs>

