



**Public Health Pests and Nursing Nightmares:
Practical Strategies for Managing Bed Bugs and Other Creepy Crawlies**

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During the 2019 Annual Convention

Summary: Bed bugs (*Cimex lectularis*) are pests of public health importance that med-surg nurses may encounter at some point during their career. Identification of a bed bug problem is possible through an examination of the patient and their environment. A tiered approach to managing bed bug introductions in the hospital can reduce risks. Scabies is a skin infestation by the skin mite *Sarcoptes scabiei var. hominis*, which can be transmitted from person to person. Managing patients in the hospital with scabies includes the use of standard and contact precautions and special care of the patient's environment.

Nursing Implications:

- Nurses need to become familiar with bed bug identification and behavior.
- An intact bug must be captured and placed in a specimen cup for testing.
- Nurses need to become familiar with scabies infestation and modes of transmission.
- Nurses will know consensus strategies for infection prevention involving patients with bed bugs, scabies, and other pests.

Key Takeaways:

- Bed bugs are not known to cause disease transmission in hospitals – use standard precautions.
- Bed bugs cannot fly; can walk fast; hide during the day (“feed” at night); prefer fabric (bedding and mattresses), wood, and paper surfaces; and can cling to surfaces.
- With bed bugs, an exterminator must inspect a patient’s room to determine how long the room/area must remain closed.
- Scabies is confirmed by skin scraping and microscope evidence.

Link: <https://library.amsn.org/amsn/sessions/5253/view>

References:

<https://www.cuyahogabedbugs.org/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/scabies/index.html>

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