



WRHA COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES PROTOCOL FOR COCKROACHES IN CLIENT'S HOMES

PREAMBLE

Cockroaches have been found in the homes of some clients visited by staff from various WRHA/WIS programs. The following information and algorithm are to assist staff and their supervisors to understand and deal with these occasional infestations.

International travel, commerce and changes to pesticides registered in Canada are thought to facilitate the spread of these insect hitchhikers. Adult cockroaches, nymphs and eggs, are easily transported in luggage, clothing, bedding, and furniture. Cockroaches are most frequently found in dwellings with a high rate of occupant turnover, such as hotels, shelters, and apartment complexes.

DEFINITIONS

Cockroaches are brown insects with antenna and are about 1 to 5 cm in length when fully grown and range in colour from black to reddish-brown. Cockroaches feed on garbage, wood, leather, soap, human food and a variety of other items.

Cockroach Precautions:

Precautions implemented for a cockroach infestation (e.g. Correct PPE, bag and seal items).

Case Coordination in community: Professional that provides coordination of community -based care, i.e. Home Care Case Coordinator, Community Mental Health Coordinator.

Client: Person receiving care in a community setting.

Health Care Worker (HCW): An individual who may have the potential to acquire or transmit an infectious agent during the course of their work in the health care workplace (e.g. Nurses, Mental Health Workers, Direct Service Staff, Case Workers Volunteers and Emergency Responders).

Injury/Near Miss Form (INM): To be completed by WRHA Health Care Workers in consultation with their supervisor and or designate to report the occurrence of any actual or potential occupational incidents or exposure.

Non-occupational Exposure: Cockroaches acquired from own personal contact, not related to work duties (e.g. Hotel stay, visiting a friend).

OESH: refers to the Occupational and Environmental Safety & Health Department of the WRHA.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): One element in the Hierarchy of Controls. PPE consists of gowns, masks, facial protection (e.g. Masks and eye protection, face shields or masks with visor attachment), Tyvek suit, high booties or respirators that can be used by a Health Care Worker or other staff to provide a barrier that will prevent potential exposure to infectious



microorganisms (taken from [WRHA IP&C Routine Practices](#)). PPE issued is dependent upon the severity of the infestation.

Supervisor: Person to whom a Health Care Worker reports to.

Winnipeg Integrated Services (WIS): Integrated health and social services between Department of Families (Government of Manitoba) and WRHA that provide efficient, effective and holistic services which are person or family focused and recognize the principles of population health and primary health care.

1. FACTS ABOUT COCKROACHES

1.1 DESCRIPTION

Depending on the particular species, adult cockroaches measure between 1 and 5 cm in length and range in colour from black to reddish-brown. A cockroach has pair of long antennae and six legs, which are typically long and spiny. The body is flattened back to front and oval-shaped.

Most species of cockroaches in Canada have wings but are not capable of sustained, powered flight. Some species may use their wings to glide for short distances. Winnipeg has three species of cockroaches: American, German, and Oriental.

COCKROACHES



Oriental cockroach



American cockroach



German cockroach

They are perfectly equipped for hiding in small cracks or crevices that touch both the topside and the underside of the body. Immature cockroaches, known as nymphs, look like smaller wingless versions of fully-grown adults.

If a cockroach can find food and shelter, it can lay eggs. The cockroach population can rapidly grow as it doesn't take too much time for a cockroach to develop into an adult. Once a nymph reaches adulthood, it can almost immediately begin mating. Depending on environmental conditions, the adult's lifespan ranges from 6-12 months and multiple generations can occur each



year. There are overlapping generations and all stages may be present at the same time. Adult cockroaches may live for up to one month without food and water.

1.2 EVIDENCE OF A COCKROACH INFESTATION

- Cockroach feces will be visible during an infestation. Small roaches produce feces that resemble coffee grounds or black pepper, while larger roaches expel cylindrical droppings. The quantity of visible feces is oftentimes a good indicator of the level or duration of infestation.
- Observation of an outer shell – exoskeleton – shed and left behind when a nymph goes through its stages of growth until it becomes an adult roach.
- In the event of serious infestation, a strong oily or musty odour may be present. The bodies of dead cockroaches can also be found throughout the residence.

1.3 FEEDING HABITS

- Cockroaches emerge from hiding spots to feed when it's light or dark.
- They consume all foods humans and animals eat.
- Cockroaches have chewing mouthparts and can chew through paper, cloth or cardboard to reach available food such as sugar, candy, meat, milk products, bread and glue. They will also eat bookbinding's, dead insects, human and animal wastes and all kinds of garbage.

1.4 HIDING PLACES

- Cockroaches like dark, warm, moist confined spaces.
- They can be found tucked away anywhere in a home as long as there's something to eat nearby, and they can be safe. Common cockroach hideouts include:
 - Near plumbing fixtures
 - Cracks in cupboards
 - Under drawers in bathrooms and kitchens
 - Kitchen sinks
 - Basements
 - Crawl spaces
 - Behind or under refrigerators
 - Under washing machines
 - Food storage areas
 - Behind pictures on the walls
 - Inside furniture or clutter
 - Drains

1.5 DISEASE TRANSMISSION

- Although cockroaches may carry hazardous bacteria and viruses that can cause human illnesses they **do not** directly transmit these diseases to humans. They may carry bacteria as they eat almost



anything they find, including food that has gone bad, travel through garbage and/or sewers, leaving the bacteria behind on food or food preparation areas. People with asthma may have a negative reaction to their droppings (feces) and body parts.

- Cockroaches do not bite, but their spiky legs can cause scratches.

2. CLIENT HAS SUSPECTED OR CONFIRMED COCKROACH INFESTATION

2.1 STAFF WORKING IN INFESTED HOME

1. If staff note signs of infestation of cockroaches or the client notified staff, staff must notify supervisors immediately as soon as cockroach infestation is suspected/confirmed.
2. To minimize transference:
 - Do not bring bags, purses and coats into infested areas.
 - Don proper PPE (gloves, Tyvek suit, high booties (for severe infestation) outside of infested area leaving personal items in bin or vehicle.
 - Do not store items in infested areas.
 - During visits do not bring items in that will likely have to be taken out of the client's suite.
 - Do not bring possibly infested items into another home.
3. Supervisor shall report possible infestations to the individual most likely to initiate steps to deal with the cockroaches, e.g. building owner, homeowner.
4. Supervisor will update the SAFT for infestation and put together a safe visit plan.
5. Confirm cockroach infestation with pest control specialist.
6. Supervisor shall inform all staff who attend the infested location and provide training and equipment as required.
7. OESH may be contacted for direction.

COCKROACH PRECAUTIONS

Cockroach precautions shall be implemented for all confirmed cases of infestations.

- **Precautions are used by staff entering the client's suite/home.**
- Cockroach precautions before providing care:
 - Gown
 - High top booties, worn over Tyvek suit if applicable
 - Gloves
 - Head cover (if Tyvek suit does not come with hood)
 - Tyvek suit (for severe infestations determined by pest control specialist)
 - Please contact OESH for additional guidance.
- Cockroach precautions to take prior to leaving client's home:
 - Remove all PPE, at the door of the client's suite, place in plastic bag and seal for disposal outside of client's home in garbage receptacle home/apartment complex
 - Perform hand hygiene



2.2 LAUNDRY DUTIES ASSIGNED AT CLIENT'S HOME

- If laundry needs sorting before placing in washing machine, put all laundry into the bathtub to sort, shaking while doing so.
- Place sorted laundry inside separate garbage bags for transport to the laundry room. Rinse excess bugs down the drain.
- Once at washing machine, put on gloves and dump laundry directly into washing machine from plastic bag. Remove gloves and perform hand hygiene.
- Launder all linen in hot water and dry in hot dryer for full cycle.
- After linen is cleaned and dried, place in a tightly sealed container or bag. If client requires the bed to be made linens will go back on bed and not in bag.
- When leaving, at the door of the client's suite remove the gloves, Tyvek suit and high booties and discard in a plastic bag. Seal the plastic bag tightly and dispose outdoors in the garbage or in a designated dumpster. Perform hand hygiene.

2.3 CLIENTS COMING INTO RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES OR DAY PROGRAMS

- Inform clients/referral teams clients can only bring one bag or piece of luggage to the unit. Change(s) of clothing should be kept to a minimum and transported to the unit in a sealed plastic bag.
- Upon arrival to the unit, client clothing should be removed from their bag and placed directly into the washing machine if possible. Plastic bag is to be disposed of in waste receptacle.
- If washing machine is not available, place contents of plastic bag into clean plastic bag, being careful to tie it off. Store in client storage area for duration of client visit.
- If the client is using a luggage bag, the bag should be placed in a plastic garbage bag, tied off, and placed in client storage area for the duration of the admission.
- Provide the client with clean clothing if possible.
- If shower facility is available provide client with necessary toiletries, and ask if client would like to take a shower, placing all clothing on their person into a plastic bag, being careful to tie it off.
- If no shower facility available, ask client to change to clean clothing, placing all clothing on their person into a plastic bag, being careful to tie it off.
- If washing machine available, all clothes should be washed at a high-water temperature and ensure clothes are completely dried at high temperature.
- Clothing/items that cannot be laundered should be removed and placed into a seal-able or placed into a bag and tied closed then stored in the client storage area
- Outdoor clothing should not be laundered. All footwear and outdoor clothing should be bagged in a plastic bag and stored in client storage area for the entire admission.



2.4 CLIENTS VISITING PRIMARY CARE SITES OR ATTENDING INTERVIEW TYPE APPOINTMENTS

- Clients who have a known cockroach infestation should be placed in a room designated for interviewing bed bug/ cockroach infested clients.
- Room should be prepared as follows:
 - Select room with no carpet flooring if possible
 - Room should not contain upholstered furniture
 - Remove additional supplies/items stored in room or fully seal items in plastic bags.
 - A hall tree should be available for hanging coats, bags, etc. on
 - Double sided tape should be applied to baseboards around perimeter of room to seal opening between baseboard and flooring, and baseboard and wall.
 - Double sided tape should be applied along sides of door frame, across top of door frame and across threshold of entryway.
 - Double sided tape should be applied to legs of tables and chairs. Flooring and furniture should be vacuumed after client leaves and vacuum bag or contents of hopper placed in plastic bag and sealed for disposal.

2.5 ORDERING SUPPLIES

1. Information on specific supplies required/approved for cockroaches shall be provided by OESH/SHU.
2. An adequate amount of appropriate supplies shall be maintained in each community office and After-Hours Unit for emergency use.
3. Once a specific client has been identified, supplies are ordered for that specific client for delivery to the office site and are picked up at the office site by the Direct Service Staff and other health care workers going into that client’s home.
4. Do not store items (such as gowns, Tyvek suits, gloves and booties) in infested areas.
5. Community sites will be responsible to identify options for alternative storage and emergency access storage when there are major infestations in large blocks. Supplies should not be stored in common area without special packaging (stored in a sealed manner to protect supplies).
6. Current specific supplies (WRHA programs):

Item	SAP
Disposable Coverall Elastic Zipper w/Hood – XL	204375
Disposable Coverall Elastic Zipper w/Hood – 2XL	204048
Disposable Coverall Elastic Zipper w/Hood 3XL	207588
Disposable Coverall Elastic Zipper w/Hood 4XL	210017
Coverall Elastic Back/Hood/Limbs MED	311064



Item	SAP
Coverall Elastic Back/Hood/Limbs LG	311063
Disposable gloves	As per gloves guidelines
Cover Boot Tyvek One Size 10"	303185

APPENDIX:

[Appendix A - WRHA Community Health Services Cockroach Algorithm](#)

REFERENCES:

1. Cockroaches: What you need to know! Government of Manitoba. [Cockroaches \(gov.mb.ca\)](http://gov.mb.ca)
2. <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/pest-control-tips/cockroaches.html>
3. <https://legacy.winnipeg.ca/publicworks/insectcontrol/insect/cockroaches.stm#:~:text=Winnipeg%20has%20three%20species%20of,American%2C%20German%2C%20and%20Oriental.>
4. <https://www.orkinCanada.ca/pests/cockroaches/>
5. <https://pestech.com/online-guides/cockroaches/causes-habits-cockroaches/>
6. <https://poulins.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Roaches-German-Cockroaches.pdf>
7. <https://www.canada.ca/en/sr/srb.html?q=cockroaches&wb-srch-sub=>