

Youth & Children Medical Needs Policy

Basic Infection Control

Most youth events take place without any major medical issues. That said, directors, camp staff, parents/guardians, and campers can work together to reduce the spread of contagious medical issues that arise at these gatherings. The shared living conditions at these events create a necessity to work to prevent the spread of respiratory, gastric, and parasitic ailments. Many of the risks associated with the spread of these health issues can be reduced by requiring parents to keep sick kids home, encouraging hand washing, especially before eating, having a staff member with basic first aid or medical training present at youth events, and temporarily isolating and sending home symptomatic campers or staff when necessary. If enough campers or staff become sick, it might become necessary for the site director to decide to end the event early. In some instances, like after suspected food poisoning or a 24-hour bug, the site director and medical person can determine whether to allow attendees to return if they are asymptomatic without medication for at least 24 hours.

Event Registration Forms and Welcome Letters should communicate to parents the need to keep campers at home when they are sick. In the case of sickness, a full refund of registration costs should be available and clearly stated on the Registration Forms and in Welcome Letters. Registration Forms and Welcome Letters should encourage families of attendees with chronic allergies to start allergy medications in the weeks leading up to an event and should send allergy medication with their attendees to the event. Registration forms should encourage families to document their attendees' basic health history and encourage families to inform the medical person at the event of any significant concerns.

Along with basic over-the-counter medication, medical boxes at events should include masks and COVID-19 tests. Mask-wearing should be strongly encouraged if attendees develop an uncontrollable cough or runny nose. If an attendee develops COVID-like or allergy-like symptoms but has no known history of chronic allergies, the event medical person should test the attendee for COVID-19. If the attendee tests positive, they should be temporarily isolated, and families should arrange for them to get picked up from the event. If the attendee tests negative, a follow-up test should be done after 24 hours.

If there is any sort of public health outbreak, each camp will follow the guidance of their respective public health agencies.

Infestation Infection Control

While head lice and bed bugs do not transmit disease, they can be a significant nuisance in camping environments. Volunteers need to respond to these infestations quickly to prevent the spread to other attendees. Attendees with lice will need to be isolated and sent home, and attendees with bed bugs will need to be treated and be relocated to a different cabin.

Parents may get upset or angry when they learn their child has head lice. But having head lice is common and has nothing to do with good hygiene or parenting. In fact, good health and hygiene habits or a clean house have nothing to do with it. Staff should discourage attendees from making negative comments about any attendee who is found to have lice.

If live lice are discovered at an event, preserve the lice on a piece of scotch tape doubled over itself. Document on the first aid report who found the lice and when. The attendee should be temporarily isolated and arrangements must be made for them to go home. While schools have eased up on allowing kids to return to school after treatment, the closed environment of overnight events increases the risk of spreading lice. If an attendee must be sent home because of lice, please let the region know immediately.

If you suspect that someone in your camp has been bitten by bed bugs, thoroughly examine crevices in walls, mattresses, and furniture. You will need to perform your inspection at night when bed bugs are active. Be sure to work with your camp healthcare staff. Generally, the redness and itch associated with bed bug bites usually go away on their own within a week or two. Treatments to speed the recovery might include a skin cream containing hydrocortisone or an oral antihistamine, such as diphenhydramine (Benadryl), if a skin infection develops from scratching bed bug bites, a doctor may prescribe an antibiotic. If bedbugs are found at a campground, please inform the campground, make arrangements to stop using the part of the facilities where bed bugs were found, and please let the Regional Office know immediately.

Please see the current Northern Lights Region's Youth & Children's Ministries Manual for more information concerning lice and bed bugs.

Medical Treatment

If advanced medical treatment beyond what the medical person at an event can provide is required, use these steps to guide you through the process.

The director and at least one other adult should accompany the event attendee to the hospital or medical facility. If possible, contact the parent or guardian before transporting the event attendee. Make sure you have the attendee's medical information and insurance information. The attendee's insurance is the primary insurance. This should be made clear to the parent or guardian. Complete a Medical Incident Form and keep it with your report information. Please contact the site director and keep the region informed.

Approved by the Northern Lights Regional Board, March 17, 2024