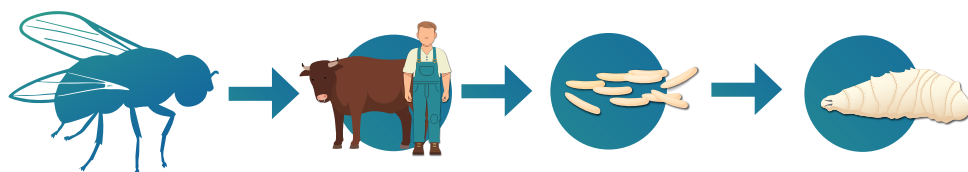


New World Screwworm: What Healthcare Workers Need to Know



New world screwworm (NWS) is a re-emerging threat to the United States that can cause serious infections in people exposed to the fly.

What is New World Screwworm?



NWS is a parasitic fly that lays eggs on or in the open wounds and mucous membranes of animals, and sometimes humans. These eggs hatch into maggots (i.e. larvae) that feed on living tissue causing severe damage and potential for serious infections.

While NWS eggs and maggots are most commonly found in open wounds, they can also be in the nose, ears, eyes, mouth, or genitals.

What is the risk?

It may be only a matter of time until NWS is spread in a healthcare setting has not been reported in the United States, but remember and it does not spread person-to-person or animal-to-person. It is still important to take the appropriate infection control actions when caring for a patient with suspected NWS infestation. Healthcare workers need to be aware of NWS and follow recommendations for reporting and waste management to prevent the establishment of a local population of NWS flies in the community.

Recognizing NWS infestations

Consider a possible NWS infestation if the patient has spent time where flies are present and has the following symptoms:



Can feel or see something moving within the wound



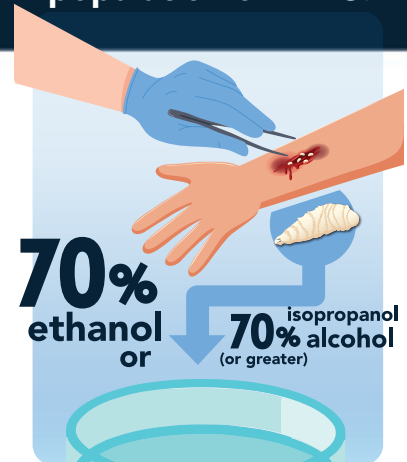
Has painful or bad-smelling sores

Actions Healthcare Workers Must Take for a Suspected NWS-infested patient

The goal when caring for a patient with NWS is to remove and properly dispose of all maggots to limit tissue damage and prevent them from developing into adult flies.

- Collect all maggots, including those that fell out of the wound or were removed from the wound.
- Kill and preserve all maggots and eggs by putting them in a container and fully covering them with 70% ethanol (preferred) or $\geq 70\%$ isopropanol alcohol.
- Closely inspect linens and patient clothing or belongings for any maggots that may have left the wound.
- Follow your state regulations and the instructions from your facility's waste management team for getting rid of remaining dead maggots and chemicals you used to kill them.

NEVER put live maggots in the trash or down the drain because they can survive and develop into a local population of NWS.



Notify the infection control team or your supervisor if you find living maggots in any patient and follow instructions for sending alcohol-preserved maggots to the health department. If the patient asks about a potentially infested animal, tell them to contact a veterinarian right away.

Prevent other germs from getting into NWS wounds



Clean your hands before and after touching your patient or the patient's surroundings.



Wear gloves for wound care, and gowns if needed for larger wounds.



Cover any of your own wounds or broken skin that is not covered by clothing.

Learn more about New World Screwworm
screwwormnm.org

Questions? Call the NMDOH Helpline at 1-833-SWNURSE (1-833-796-8773) or text questions to 66364 (NMDOH).