

Protocol for dealing with callers/walk-ins who have something biting them.

1. Is it visible?
2. Is it indoors or outdoors?
 - Outdoors: try to capture the culprit and take a photo or sample. If it is large enough to see (such as a mosquito) it is legitimate.
 - Indoors: Fleas are a possibility, even if the client does not have pets. Bedbugs are large enough to see (1/4 inch) and photograph.

Penn State factsheet: <http://hgic.umd.edu/content/documents/bedBugs.pdf>

Cornell NYS IPM factsheet: www.nysipm.cornell.edu/publications/bed_bugs/files/bed_bug.pdf

Other possibilities indoors include bird mites which are tiny, but visible. Ask the client to check for bird nests on the home. When birds fledge, the mites disperse and some may enter the home.

Penn State factsheet: www.ento.psu.edu/extension/factsheets/pdfs/BirdMites.pdf

- Other biting mites include straw-itch mites and oak leaf gall mites. Many non-biting small insects that may be found in the home include: springtails, booklice, small beetles and flies.
 - If they insist they are being bitten, and see “small bugs” in the bed, dug out of the person or anywhere from the body.etc. This is a medical issue and we cannot accept these samples.
3. Human related samples are a biohazard and may contain MRSA which is a big concern. The bacteria can last a long time on surfaces exposing people to the danger. In addition to MRSA there are many other dangerous pathogens that may be associated with the samples. We do not have the ability to contain or handle any biohazard samples.
 - Tell them that we are not medically licensed and suggest a dermatologist or allergist. If it turns out to be something legitimate, the medical professionals will deal with the problem.
 - Suggest they read this factsheet “Is Something Biting Me?” thoroughly and keep it handy for reference: <http://hgic.umd.edu/content/documents/BitingMe.pdf>.

Protocol for dealing with callers/walk-ins who have something biting them.

4. The best help you can give these people is a referral to a medical professional. If the medical professionals believe that an arthropod is involved they (the Drs.) can send it in to the State Health Department be identified.