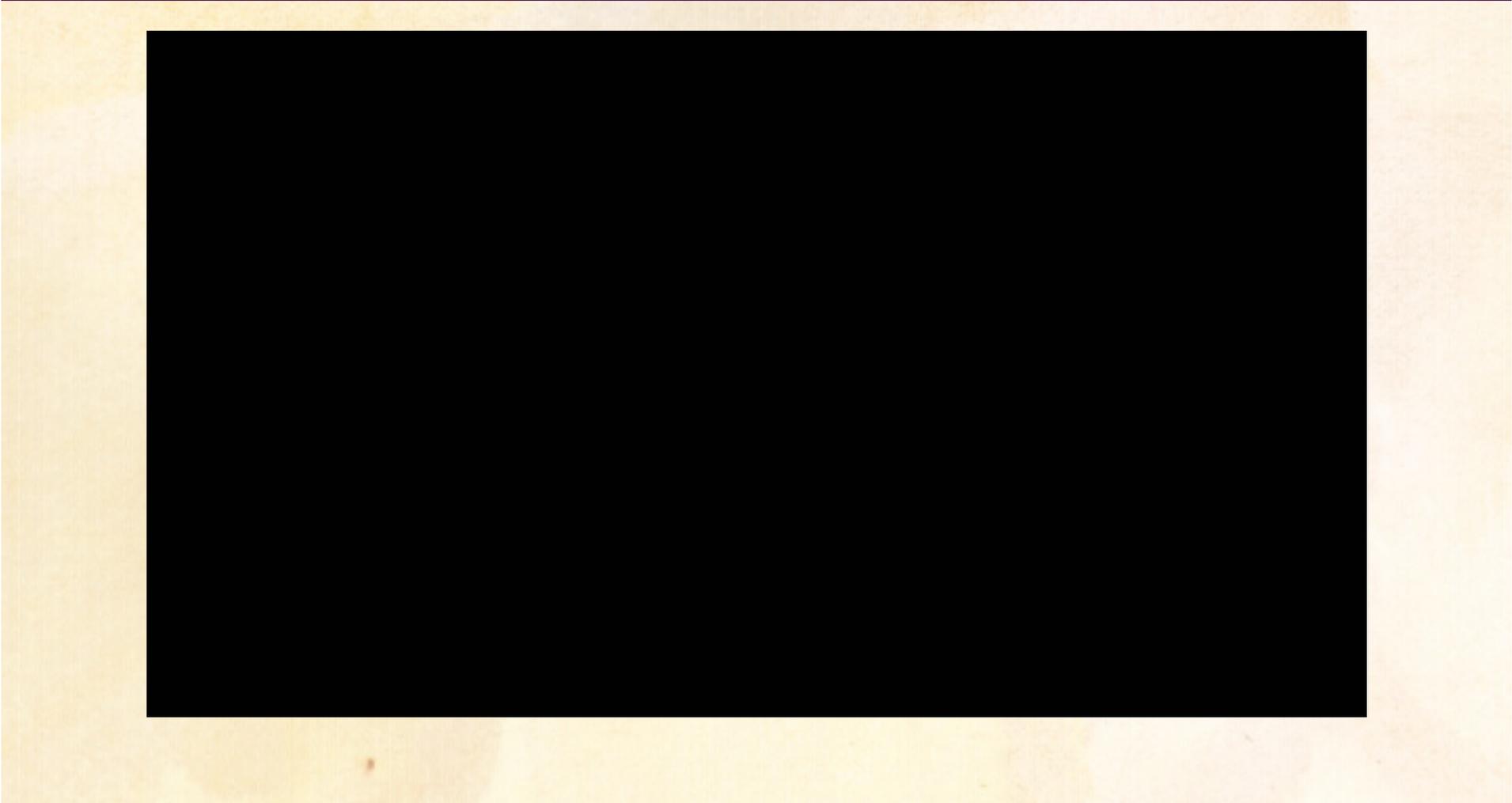


**Caring for Yourself While Caring for Others**

**Module 3: Tips for Reducing Risks  
From Environmental Exposures  
When Providing Homecare**

**Presenter's Name**

**Host Organization**



# Session Goals

## Participants will be able to do the following:

- Identify common environmental risks homecare workers may be exposed to.
- Outline the potential impacts from environmental risks.
- Describe strategies and tools that can reduce risks.
- Follow positive problem-solving steps with clients to reduce risks.



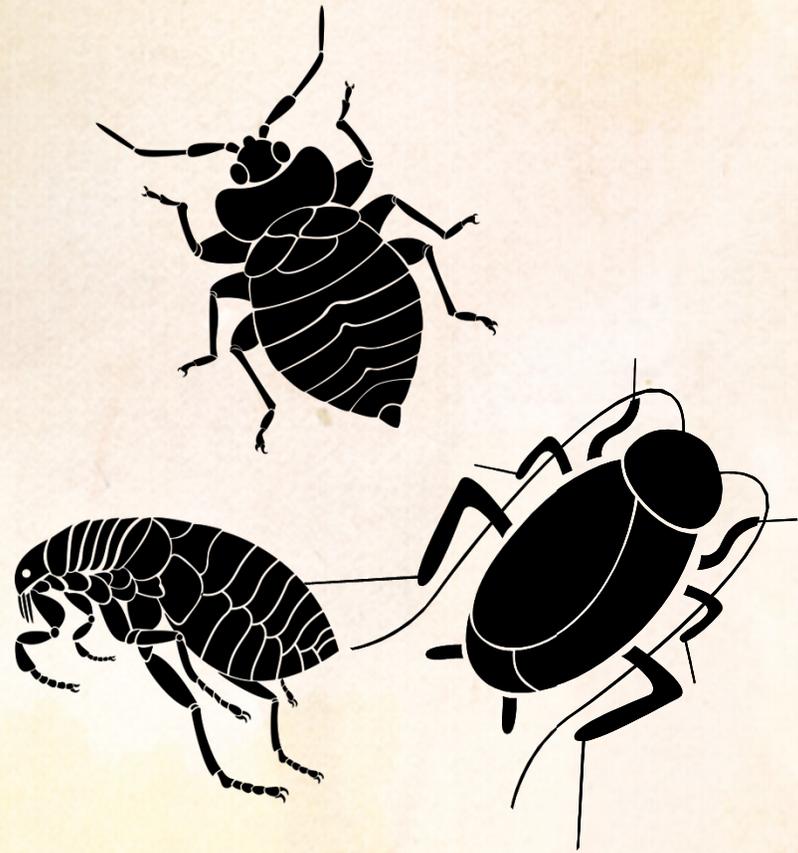
# Risks, Impacts, and Tips: Pest Infestations

## Examples:

- Bedbugs, mites, lice, rodents.

## Potential Impacts:

- Infections.
- Bites.
- Itches, rashes.



Illustrations by Thinkstock

# Safety and Health Tips: Pest Infestations

- Use clean, plastic-lined pads under equipment, bags, purses, supplies.
- Take only necessary supplies and equipment into homes.
- Avoid setting purses, bags, or other items on carpets, floors, and furniture.
- Use gloves and wash hands often.
- Change and wash clothes and hair after work.
- Wear disposable coveralls.



Illustrations by Thinkstock

# Risks, Impacts: Pets in the Home

## Examples:

Dogs, cats, birds.

## Potential Impacts:

- Allergic reactions.
- Attacks and bites.
- Scratches.
- Transmission of infections.
- Fear and anxiety.



Illustrations by Thinkstock

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# Safety and Health Tips: Pets in the Home

- If the pet seems threatening, make sure it is restrained before going in the home.
- Make sure animals are confined while working.
- Avoid eye contact with pets and stay calm.
- If knocked over, lie still.
- Use gloves if handling animal feces or urine.
- Wash hands often.

# Risks and Impacts: Extreme Temperatures

## Potential Impacts:

- Chills.
- Colds and flu.
- Fainting from excessive heat.
- Stress and discomfort.



# Safety and Health Tips: Extreme Temperatures

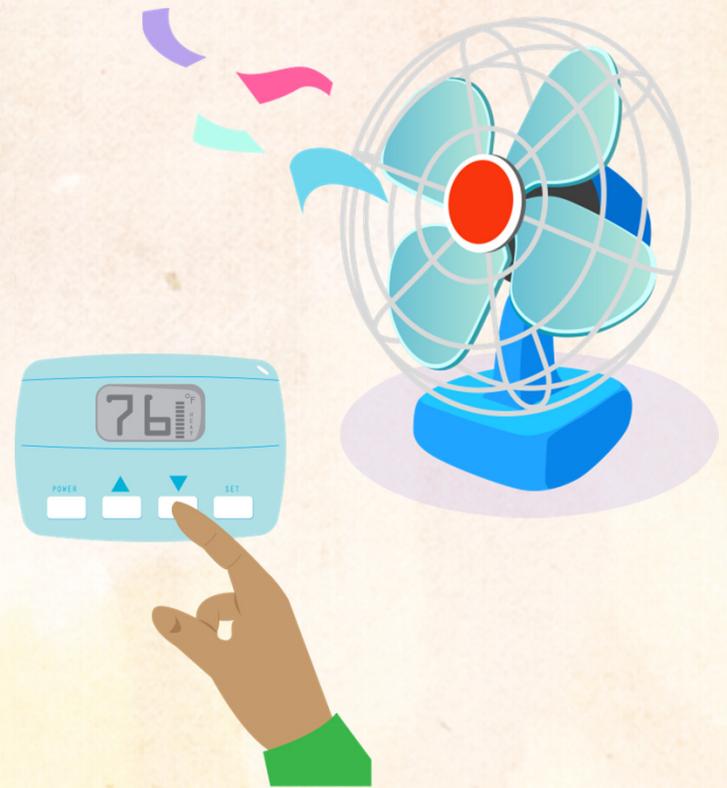
**Speak with client and contact your employer**

## **For heat, try these tips:**

- Open windows, use fans.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Apply cool compresses to neck.

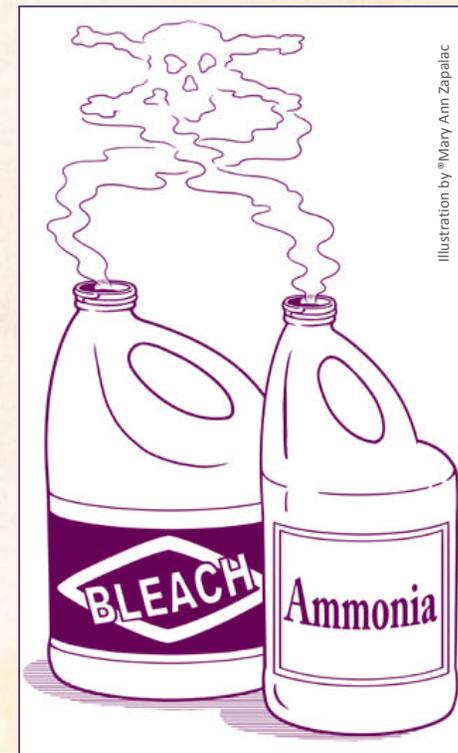
## **For cold, try these tips:**

- Change thermostat.
- Contact social service agencies.



# Risks and Impacts: Cleaning Agents

- Skin rashes, burns, and irritation.
- Red, itchy eyes.
- Breathing trouble.
  - *Wheezing, coughing, shortness of breath.*
- Headaches, dizziness.



# Safety and Health Tips: Cleaning Agents

- Use less-harmful choices.
- Use cleaning gloves.
- Ventilate work areas.
- Do not spray mists—squirt onto sponge.
- Keep products in their original labeled containers.



Illustration by ©Mary Ann Zapalac

# Risks and Impacts: Cigarette and Other Smoke

- Cough, sore throat.
- Stress, discomfort.
- Fire hazard.
- Increased risk of:
  - Cancer.
  - Heart attack.
  - Asthma aggravation.



Illustration by © Microsoft Office

# Safety and Health Tips: Cigarette and Other Smoke

## Speak with client and discuss the following:

- Agree on a no smoking policy during your work hours.
- Air cleaners and isolating smoking to just one room are *NOT* effective in protecting you and others in the home from second-hand smoke.
- Install smoke detectors.

# Risks and Impacts: Mold and Mildew in Homes

## Risks:

- Dampness, especially in bathrooms and basements.
- Leaky or flooded homes.

## Health Impacts:

- Allergic reactions.
- Ear, nose, and throat irritation.
- Asthmatic aggravation.



<http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/faqs.htm>

# Health and Safety Tips: Mold and Mildew in Homes

- Identify moisture sources and eliminate, or tell client about leaks.
- Remove affected porous materials and furniture.
- Speak with supervisor regarding concerns.
- Use soap or a detergent solution and water to clean small areas of mold on walls or other hard surfaces.

# Talk it Over!

**Bring up health and safety issues as soon as possible.**

- Plan the discussion.
- Be respectful—make a request, not a demand.
- Use “I” statements. Describe your health and safety concern, how it affects you, and what the impact might be on you and the client.
- Listen. See the issue from the client’s point of view.
- Consider several solutions beyond your first choice.
- Know your bottom line.

# *Thanks for Your Great Participation!*

## **Additional Resources:**

- Homecare workers' handbook: *Caring for Yourself While Caring for Others* .  
<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2015-103/pdf/2015-103.pdf>
- NIOSH Hazard Review: “Occupational Hazards and Home Health Care.”  
<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2010-125/pdfs/2010-125.pdf>
- *Home and Community Health Worker Handbook*, British Columbia, Canada, OHSAH.  
<http://www.phsa.ca/NR/rdonlyres/6C69D638-8587-4096-A8AA-7D2B0141C3B2/59614/HandbookHomeandCommunityHealthcareWorkersHandbook.pdf>
- *Safety Manual for Homecare Workers*, Oregon Homecare Commission.  
<http://apps.state.or.us/Forms/Served/de9062.pdf>

# Credits

- [Insert trainer and/or training organization's name(s), and contact information here.]