



NEW WORLD SCREWORM

DETECTING AND REPORTING SCREWORM

- FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS -

New World Screwworm Myiasis

New World Screwworm (*Cochliomyia hominivorax*) myiasis occurs when an adult fly lays its eggs in an open wound or body opening of a live animal or person. The resulting fly larvae (maggots) burrow deep into the wound to feed on living tissue. Screwworm larvae commonly infest livestock, pets, and wildlife, **but can occasionally infest humans.**

Detecting Screwworm in Humans

Health Care providers should remain alert for a potential screwworm infestation in humans. Review patient travel history, exposure to livestock, and outdoor activities to help determine risk.

During health exam, inspect for...

- Wounds or lesions that are malodorous, swollen, painful, draining excessive fluid, or not resolving. Even small wounds and cuts can harbor screwworm. Screwworm can also invade natural body openings, especially mucous membranes.
- Maggots or egg masses in wounds (myiasis). Older maggots have a “screw-like” appearance with bands of spines encircling the body (see image). Patients may report feeling something moving in a wound or body opening.



Screwworm maggots.
Image Credit: USDA

Report Suspected Screwworm Myiasis

Screwworm is a serious foreign animal disease and must be reported within 24 hours of detection.

Report: Report suspect screwworm myiasis to Dept of Public Health Epi on Call: **961-328-3605**.

- **Collect Samples:** Gently remove a sample of 10 maggots from superficial and deep areas of the wound and place into 70% ethanol or isopropyl alcohol for additional testing by a diagnostic laboratory. Do not discard live maggots in the trash.
- **Sample Submission:** Follow California State Health Official instructions for sample labeling and submission.