



# Berkeley Neighborhood Deals With Rodent Infestation

By Cheryl Hurd, 7th September 2017

Residents of an East Bay neighborhood were not sleeping easy Wednesday night. They had rats on their mind.

The rodent infestation was so bad in North Berkeley that one woman had to temporarily move out of her home. It's a problem the city is aware of, but there hasn't been a solution to it.

The rats are causing a lot of problems for Christine Simon and her next door neighbor.

"It started in May," Simon said. "I got mysterious bites all over my body, very itchy."



Simon's dermatologist narrowed her problem down to rat mites. They are parasites that live on rats much like fleas.

"They take up to two months to die on their own," Simon said. "Two months of going to bed every night and being eaten alive."

Berkeley city officials have been notified of the problem by way of floods of calls to the city's environmental health department.

"The issue of rodents is an ongoing challenge," said Manuel Ramirez, environmental health manager.

Officials said the rodents come in three varieties: Norway rats, roof rats and mice. They said the wet winter has contributed to the city's rodent problem as overgrown vegetation gives the rats a place to live. Leaving out pet food can also draw in the rodents. The city's vector team has been citing homeowners and giving advice.