

## BMOREBEDBUGS1-DUCHAMP

For Mon Nov 22

Public health departments around the region are teaching people about bed bugs: how to avoid, detect them, and get rid of them. In Baltimore, the message is that neighbors need to help each other manage the problem. Baltimore reporter Cathy Duchamp [do-SHAWM] explains the rationale behind the communal approach.

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Bedbugs are hitchhikers that crawl between shared walls. That's a problem in a city that's chock-a-block with row houses:

*They could be next door and you might not know it. And when people try to get rid of them on their own they'll do things that repel the bugs into their neighbors' homes.*

That's Mike O'Leary with the Baltimore Department of Public Health. He says if you have bedbugs, you need to tell your neighbors, so you can come up with a solution together, instead of sending the bugs back and forth between homes. Admitting publicly that you have bed bugs is a tall order. That's why O'Leary says he's working hard to reduce the stigma associated with the bugs:

*Many people believe there are bed bugs because people are dirty or poor. It has nothing to do with that. Anyone can have bedbugs. Bedbugs are no one's fault. You can pick them up anywhere. I could have them now.*

Baltimore 311 operators have received 640 calls about bedbugs in the past 12 months. That's more than double the number of calls received in the previous 12 month period.

In Baltimore I'm Cathy Duchamp