



## Rat chat

### ***Health official warns about rodent problem***

*Added by Marlon Madden on January 12, 2016, Caribbean  
Saved under Local News*

Environmental Health Officer at the Randal Phillips Polyclinic Deborah Nurse-Batson has appealed to Barbadians to be a “little bit more tidy and clean” in order to help control the rodent population.

While not immediately providing supporting data, Nurse-Batson this morning told new students of the American University of Barbados (AUB) that poor garbage disposal habits were contributing to a rat problem here.

“In Barbados right now we are having a problem with rats, and rats are encouraged because of our habits – the practice of humans where we don’t practice [proper] storage of our garbage or proper disposal. All of these things lead to the encouragement of rodents,” she insisted.

In her address at the 2016 spring semester orientation ceremony at the AUB where as she gave a presentation on the types of vector and rodent related diseases and signs and symptoms of these diseases, the health official said there were three known species of rodents in Barbados – the house mouse, the roof rat and the ground rat.



Environmental health officer at the Randal Phillips Polyclinic  
Deborah Nurse-Batson

Nurse-Batson later told **Barbados TODAY** she could not say if the occasional pile up of garbage across the island or the illegal dumping resulted in an increase in the rodent population. However, she admitted that they were contributing factors.

“There is no denial that we have rodents and there is no denying that because of our practices there are rodents. I can’t say there is an increase or decrease but we know they are there. And if we want to eliminate them we should practice safer habits to get rid of the ones we know are there now,” she explained.

She stressed that if Barbadians were proud of their country and wanted to boast of it as “the best place in the [Western] Hemisphere and the best place in the universe”, the onus was on them to be their own health inspectors. She said they ought not to wait for inspectors to “come around and tell you this is garbage, dispose of it properly”.

The environmental health official added that if Barbadians wanted to strive for a healthier lifestyle they needed to go beyond exercise and healthy eating and pay more attention to their garbage disposal habits.

“If garbage is disposed of properly and collected properly then we wouldn’t have so many instances of rodents on the island. Rodents are attracted to human beings and the way they live and the way they dispose of the garbage.

“So we all need to learn and to understand that the rats come around because of what we do; because of lifestyles and practices and if we can learn to be a little bit more tidy and clean, – not saying that Barbadians aren’t clean or tidy – I am just saying that there might be a fraction [of the society] or some people that just don’t realize that if you throw away a candy paper, if you pelt away a sno-cone cup or throw away a piece of food or if you put out food for the pets, that these things can encourage rodents and vectors, and vectors spread diseases,” explained Nurse-Batson.

