

the dangers of rat bait

pest control results in unintentional victims

A lot of people choose to use rat and mice baits (known as rodenticides) to kill rodents, but some may not be aware of the impact they can have on pets.

Several varieties are commercially available, such as Ratsac and Talon.

They work by preventing blood from clotting. Animals that consume this poison lose blood into the environment or internal body spaces, such as the lungs or abdomen. If they don't receive veterinary attention they will become sick and are likely to die from continuing blood loss.

The major problem is signs are usually only seen 2-3 days following ingestion. It appears that small doses over several days are more dangerous than a single large dose.

Things to look for if you suspect your animal has eaten bait:

- On the day of ingestion - vomiting and lethargy or flatness
- 2-5 days after ingestion, signs are caused by bleeding and vary depending on where in the body the bleed occurs;
 - Lethargy or depression
 - Painful abdomen.
 - Extremities may be cold to the touch.
 - Bruises, pale mucous membranes, swelling of parts of the body, coughing or trouble breathing.

If you know your pet has eaten bait, seek veterinary advice immediately.

The animal will be induced to vomit to remove any poison in the stomach - this

helps prevent further absorption. Activated charcoal may be given orally to absorb any poison still remaining in the digestive tract after vomiting.

Mouse and rat baits work by preventing blood from clotting. If you know your pet has eaten bait, seek veterinary advice immediately.

If you find your animal with any of the signs suggesting rat bait ingestion, seek veterinary attention immediately. A thorough health check will be performed and, if poisoning is suspected, a blood test that measures clotting ability will be conducted. If the clotting time is prolonged then it is highly suggestive of poisoning. A red blood cell count will be done and, if low, a blood transfusion may be necessary. X-rays and intravenous fluids may be also be indicated.

In most cases, treatment is successful. Sadly, if a bleed occurs in a vital area or organ, pets can die despite appropriate treatment.

Most rodenticides remain in the body for 4-6 weeks, therefore therapy will need to continue for this period of time. The mainstay of treatment is oral Vitamin K1, which helps to replenish missing blood clotting factors.



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