

Rodenticide Toxicity

What are rodenticides?

Rodenticides are poisons often used to control rodent (mice and rat) populations. They are also known as rat bait or rat poison. Unfortunately all rat poisons are toxic to dogs and cats in addition to rodents.

What types of rat poison are out there?

There are three main types of rat poison regularly used.

1. The most common are Vitamin K antagonists, which block the use of Vitamin K by the liver and lead to severe bleeding abnormalities 3-4 days after ingestion.
2. Bromethalin is another type of rat poison that will result in severe neurologic abnormalities (seizures, coma, and possibly death).
3. Vitamin D analogues are rat poisons that cause high Vitamin D levels that then lead to high calcium levels in the blood and eventually kidney failure.

How do we treat these poisonings?

The most important part of treatment is decontamination, which can be performed by inducing vomiting if the animal gets to a hospital within 1-2 hours after ingesting the poison. Then depending on which type of rat poison your animal ingested we will likely recommend additional therapy for that specific type.

What are signs that my animal got in to rat poison?

The most confirmatory findings is that your pet is sick and you know they have access to rat poison. Additionally, many rat poisons are discolored green or blue so sometimes owners will notice blue or green discolored stools earlier in the week before their pet got sick.



What are the chances of survival if my animal gets sick from rat poison?

Unfortunately this can be variable and is often dependent on the type of rat poison. Treatment of Vitamin K antagonists with blood and plasma followed by Vitamin K often has an excellent prognosis. Treatment of the bromethalin or Vitamin D rat poisons can be more difficult and have a more guarded to poor prognosis for recovery.