

Rodenticide Toxicity in Pets

Anticoagulant rodenticides are designed to kill rats, mice, and other rodents by causing internal bleeding after the rodent ingests the poisonous bait. These poisons are thus designed to taste good and be very attractive to rodents. Dogs and cats can also find this bait very tasty and may ingest it if it is placed in an accessible area around your house or yard. Signs of poisoning (toxicosis) in dogs and cats usually appear 3-5 days after they eat the rat/mouse bait.

Toxicosis is characterized by bleeding (from gums, nose, or into body cavities, other sites), pale/white gums, presence of large bruises (easily seen in less hairy areas like the abdominal skin or inside the legs and armpits), decreased appetite, bloody diarrhea, bloody vomiting, breathing difficulties, and lethargy or reluctance to exercise.

Anticoagulant toxicosis ranks among the most commonly reported toxicoses in dogs.

Common trade names for these rodenticides include (but are not limited to): D-Con, D-Cease, Anchor Rat and Mouse Bait, Purina Rat Kill Soluble, Assassin Rodenticide Bait, Boot Hill, Hawk and Just One Bite.

Prognosis for recovery is excellent with early treatment. If you see your pet eat this toxin, bring him or her to a veterinarian immediately before the clinical signs develop. Most animals respond very well to therapy with Vitamin K1.

It is very important to know which kind of rodenticide your pet ingested because some types are longer-acting than others and pets may need to be treated for a longer time period. Bring the name or actual container of rat bait with you to the veterinarian if your pet ingests this toxin in order to get the most specific and best antidote for them.

Prognosis can be poor to guarded if an animal bleeds into the chest cavity or central nervous system. Also, some pets may need very extensive therapy including hospitalization, intravenous medications, fluids, blood and plasma transfusions, monitoring of blood parameters, and oxygen supplementation, among other therapies.

This is a poisoning that can be prevented. If you have pets, it is not a good idea to have mouse/rat poison at your house. This is another reason, among others, not to let your pet roam freely without supervision as this poison could also be out at a neighbor's home. If you suspect your pet may have eaten this poison, seek veterinary care immediately.

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