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Rodenticide Toxicity

Rodenticides are a category of pest control chemicals intended to kill rodents, commonly known as rat bait. Rat bait contains an anticoagulant which effectively causes blocking of the vitamin K cycle, resulting in the inability to produce essential blood clotting factors. This product is lethal to other species including our pets; even in small doses ingesting this pest control can be fatal if left untreated.

How do I know if my pet has been poisoned?

Toxicity can be caused by dogs and cats ingesting rat bait directly (accident or malicious) or by eating a poisoned rodent whether it be dead or alive. Your pet can show signs from 1-5 days after ingestion. Some or all of the following signs may be seen;

Bleeding from any off the following areas; nose, mouth, anus, and into the eyes

Blood in urine or faeces

Bruising

Seizures

Lethargy / Weakness

Breathing problems

Is there an effective treatment once a Rodenticide has been ingested?

If you suspect your pet may have eaten rat bait or is showing any clinical signs seek veterinary advice immediately. The veterinarian may request that you bring in the packet to confirm the active ingredient of the pest control. This is important as treatment length is dependant on this. If ingested recently, induced vomiting and / or gastric lavage will be performed to reduce absorption of the toxin. In conjunction with clinical symptoms veterinarians have access to several blood tests to evaluate your pets clotting time and complete blood count.

1. Activated Clotting Time (ACT) – Determines whether your pet's blood is clotting normally.
2. Pack Cell Volume (PCV) – Determines the amount of red blood cells. This is important as the patient may have excessive bleeding and this will determine if a blood transfusion is required.

These tests are also used to monitor progress and response to treatment.

Treatment consists of administering the antidote, Vitamin K. This is available as an injection and in oral form to complete the full course. Treatment and recovery time may vary depending on the severity of the case and blood results. If caught early and vomiting is induced successfully patients may go home the same day with their course of Vitamin K. Patients who are already showing clinical signs will normally require hospitalisation and supportive care, and as mentioned earlier, blood transfusions are also available if necessary. Once at home your pet will need to be kept quiet whilst recovery continues. The entire course of Vitamin K therapy must be completed. A follow up blood test is required once the medication is finished to ensure bleeding clotting factors have returned to normal.

Rodenticide Toxicity left untreated is fatal, Seek Veterinary Advice Immediately.

“Caring for the pets of Ipswich since 1967”

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