

Rat Bait Toxicity

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What does rat bait do?

Dogs (and cats) love the yeasty taste of rat bait. They will often go to great lengths to find and eat rat bait left behind cupboards, fridges or stored in cupboards and sheds. Rat bait interferes with the formation of Vitamin K in the body. Vitamin K is essential for blood to clot properly. Without Vitamin K, your pet can bleed to death.

What are the signs of rat bait toxicity?

The signs of rat bait poisoning will not become evident for at least two to three days (and up to 4 weeks) after ingestion. After this time bleeding will start to occur.

Initially lethargy, weakness and anorexia are noticed. The most common problem recognised is collapse and breathing difficulties due to bleeding into the chest. Other signs may include blood in the urine, pain with movement (due to bleeding in the joints), bruising of the skin (difficult to see in dogs and cats due their hair), bleeding from the nose, vomiting up fresh blood or fresh blood in the stool.

How do we diagnose rat bait toxicity?

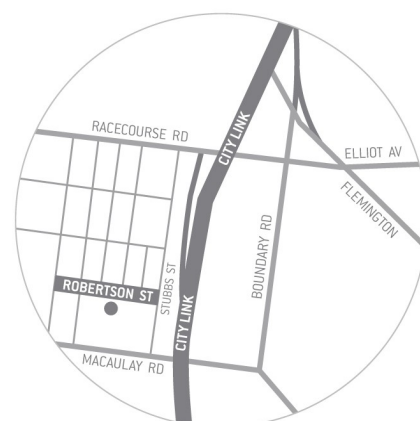
This problem can often be diagnosed from a history of recent access to rat bait at home, and blood tests to demonstrate an inability to properly form a blood clot.

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How do we treat rat bait toxicity?

If your pet has just ingested rat bait then they need to come into the clinic and your vet can induce vomiting. A blood test two to three days after possible ingestion can then be done to assess whether your pet has been affected. In most cases, an animal needs to vomit within 1 hour of eating the rat bait.

If your pet has been affected, treatment is required. Treatment involves supplementing your pet with oral Vitamin K morning and night for up to 4 weeks.

If the signs are severe then hospitalisation and blood and/or plasma transfusions are required. In some cases additional treatments, such as oxygen therapy, may be necessary.

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