

Hate Mice? Think Twice To Protect Your Pets From Poison

by Lyn T. Garson, CVT

Mice. Pesky miniature rodents everyone loves to hate. Many people resort to chemical-based products designed to send these destructive nemeses packing for good. But what happens when your pet is enticed by the poison meant for mice? The consequences can be serious—and deadly.

According to the ASPCA's Animal Poison Control Center, accidental exposures to rat and mouse baits (rodenticides) are one of the top-ten most frequently reported toxicosis in both dogs and cats.

Poison baits contain both active and inactive substances. The inactive ingredients are designed to attract mice and rats but can also be enticing to pets. Popular rodenticide products, such as d-CON®, come in a variety of forms—all having the potential to be ingested by a curious pet. Open trays of bait pellets are easily accessible, however even enclosed tins or plastic bait pouches can be chewed open by your pet to ingest the tasty contents.



The most common active substances in rodenticide products are anticoagulants (e.g., warfarin, pindone, chlorophacinone, brodifacoum, bromadiolone, diphacinone), which prevent blood from clotting. Since bleeding may occur internally anywhere in the body, pets who ingest these types of baits may show non-specific signs such as weakness, cough, difficulty breathing, or even lameness if bleeding occurs in the joints. Other types of rodenticides are those containing cholecalciferol, which cause damage to kidneys or other vital organs, and bromethalin, a neurotoxin, which can cause tremors, seizures and paralysis.

It is important to note that signs and symptoms of illness may not occur for several hours, days, or up to an entire week after ingesting poisonous baits. Therefore, any suspected incident of exposure should be reported immediately to obtain proper and potentially life-saving treatment for your pet.

Call your local veterinarian, emergency veterinary clinic, or the national 24-hour Animal Poison Control Center Hotline (888-426-4435) for assistance. Have information on hand from the product's container and/or packaging and, if known, note the amount ingested and approximate time that elapsed since exposure. Do not, under any circumstances, induce vomiting unless directed to do so by a veterinarian or the Animal Poison Control Center.

Fortunately, there are less serious consequences if your pet consumes a rodent who has ingested poisonous baits. Unless your pet exists on a steady diet of baited rodents, disease transmission or bacterial gastroenteritis are the only potential concerns for your pet and are easily treated. In these instances veterinary treatment is necessary, but not as a medical emergency.

Cohabiting with long-tailed varmints isn't for everyone. If it's not for you, try using Havahart® traps to capture and safely relocate mice elsewhere. But if you must resort to deadly measures to eradicate mice, remember to place harmful rodenticides completely out of reach to keep your pets safe.

Editor's Note: Our Companions recognizes mice as sentient creatures. Although we don't endorse methods that kill mice, we understand the health and property damage issues surrounding mice.

If you do decide to exterminate, please refrain from using glue traps. Glue traps are the least humane of all methods of mice eradication as they trap mice in a glue, permitting the mouse to slowly starve to death.