

## **What You Need to Know About Rat Poison to Keep Your Pets Safe**

There are several types of rodenticides available on the market today. The most common products are known as anticoagulant rodenticides, however newer bromethalin based products are becoming more common and pose an even greater health risk if consumed by your pet. So today, we will briefly review these two types of rodent bait in an attempt to keep your pets safe.

Typical active ingredients in the anticoagulant based rodenticides include brodifacoum, diphacinone, warfarin, and bromadiolone. Most of these products contain a green dye that gives it its characteristic appearance. These baits, due to their size and shape, can often be mistaken for kibble by dogs and cats since they have poor color vision. When consumed at a toxic level, these baits do not produce signs of poisoning for several days! The most life threatening toxicity associated with consumption is internal bleeding because the rodenticide will inhibit clotting capability by the blood. Typically the first abnormalities noted at home include weakness, blood in the stool or urine, bloody discharge from the nose, swelling of a limb or changes in breathing depending on where they are bleeding from. If a pet just recently ingested the poison, he or she can be made to vomit and gastrointestinal absorbents can be used prevent the poison from entering the blood stream. However, if there is evidence of bleeding, blood clotting tests are performed and if abnormal, vitamin K1 is started as an antidote for anticoagulant based poisons. Depending on the severity of the bleed, sometimes blood transfusions are needed as well to save the pet.

On the other hand, bromethalin type rodenticides do not have an antidote and are even more life threatening when consumed in toxic amounts verse anticoagulant type baits. Therefore, it is essential to identify the active ingredient on the package label if your pet has consumed bait! Bromethalin acts quite a bit differently and faster, impacting the nervous system as opposed to blood. Signs of toxicity occur within hours to days of ingestion, and lead to varying degrees of neurologic dysfunction such as excitability, muscle tremors, seizures and altered mentation. When consumed at toxic levels, this rodenticide poison almost always results in death.

The only preventative measure we can take is keeping either of these two toxic products away from our pets. If consumed, immediate veterinary care should be sought to quickly and easily save your pet's life!