

Rodenticide/Rat Bait Poisoning

Rat bait (a rodenticide) causes fatal bleeding in your pet because it prevents the action of vitamin K dependent clotting factors. When the pre-existing vitamin K dependent factors are exhausted, the dog can't make any more and they develop a bleeding disorder and dies.

Early signs of rat bait poisoning such as lethargy, coughing or even lameness can go undetected for some time and may lead to death if untreated.

If we know as soon as the bait has been eaten, emergency treatment involves inducing vomiting, sometimes administering activated charcoal and preventative vitamin K.

Blood tests are an essential tool to dictate lifesaving treatment.

If your pet has not started bleeding, we may not need to use blood or plasma transfusion, however Vitamin K syrup will be started immediately. Unfortunately, vitamin K only lasts a short while in the blood stream, and rodenticides can last for up to 28 days. For this reason, you will be giving vitamin K supplements twice daily for at least 28 days in all cases.

We will get you to monitor your pet at home for bleeding.

Signs of bleeding include coughing, swelling, bruising, tiny red spots on the skin and gums (petechiae), vomiting up brown stuff, dark black or red faeces.

If your pet is bleeding, we may advise either a blood or plasma transfusion, to prevent them from suffering fatal blood loss.