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TIPS FOR TREATING ANTICOAGULANT RODENTICIDE TOXICITY IN SMALL MAMMALS

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Small mammals with free access to the home could become exposed to toxicants, such as rodenticides. There are three common commercial types of rodenticides: anticoagulants, bromethalin and cholecalciferol. The anticoagulant rodenticides act through competitive inhibition of vitamin K.

Clinical signs of ingestion of an anticoagulant rodenticide include hemorrhage, pale mucous membranes, weakness, lethargy, dyspnea, coughing, and swollen joints. The onset of clinical signs in anticoagulant toxicity is dose-dependent and may not occur for several days post-ingestion because of the presence of circulating clotting factors.

Prothrombin Time (PT) could be monitored between 36-72 hours post-exposure, however, the information on established PT times is not available for most exotic pets.

Type of Anticoagulant	Minimum Duration of Therapy
Warfarin	14 days
Bromadiolone	21 days
Brodifacoum and others	30 days

Treatment Tips

- Stabilize the animal if clinical signs are evident. Transfusions with whole blood or plasma may be necessary to replace clotting factors.
- Decontamination is only effective early; 3% hydrogen peroxide is an effective emetic for ferrets. Following its use, the mouth could be gently rinsed with water to dilute the remaining peroxide. (An option would be apomorphine 5 mg/kg SC, however, adverse effects include sedation or hyperexcitability.) Do not attempt to induce emesis in rodents, rabbits, or birds. Activated charcoal (1-3 g/kg body weight) effectively adsorbs anticoagulants and can facilitate excretion via the feces.
- Injectable forms of Vitamin K₁ can be given orally at a dose of 5 mg/kg/day q8-12h. Give with a fatty meal, such as peanut butter, to enhance absorption. Vitamin K₁ should not be given intravenously, and it is possible to have an anaphylactic reaction when it is given subcutaneously.



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