

## When Dogs Eat Rat Poison

**Vomiting, followed by vitamin K is best treatment for dogs who eat rat poison.**

*By Jon Geller, DVM*

Q. My two puppies may have eaten a tiny bit of rat poison. I made them vomit and crushed vitamin K pills to a powder to give them. How much should I give a 3-pound and a 28-pound pup?

A. Eating rat poison is potentially life-threatening, especially for very small dogs. The rat poison interferes with the production of blood clotting factors, and three to five days afterward, dogs will start to bleed into different body cavities. Without intensive care including a plasma transfusion, it is often fatal.

Of course, it is too late to help your puppies if they haven't already recovered, but this may help others with the same problem.

To treat a dog who has eaten rat poison, a veterinarian will:

1. Induce vomiting within two hours (ideally at a veterinary hospital, but you can do it at home with several teaspoons of hydrogen peroxide).
2. Start treatment with vitamin K, 5 mg per kg of body weight, twice a day for three weeks or longer.
3. If later than two hours, but less than 12 hours, give activated charcoal to help prevent absorption of the rat poison.
4. If more than two days after ingestion, check clotting times and give a plasma transfusion which contains clotting factors in addition to starting on vitamin K.
5. In some critical cases, intravenous fluids and other supportive care including blood transfusions may be required.

If your puppies have been getting adequate doses of vitamin K, likely no further treatment will be required. Keep in mind vitamin K can also be prescribed through a human pharmacy, since the treatment for rat poison ingestion in people is the same. (Children have been known to ingest it). It is available in 5 mg and 25 mg capsules.