project coyote

Rodenticides:

Protecting Children and Companion Animals from Harmful Poisons

Rodenticides are deadly toxic chemicals widely used to kill rodents that harm ecosystems and create serious risks of illness and death to children and companion animals who may touch or eat them.

The Problem: Rodent Poisons Risk the Health and Safety of Our Children and Pets
Young children often explore the world by putting things in their mouths. Rodenticide bait comes in bright colors (green, blue, pink) and in shapes that resemble candy or cereal, often placed within reach on floors in garages, homes, or yards. Children and pets who ingest rodenticides can develop symptoms including vomiting, bruising, internal bleeding, and neurological disturbances. Some rodenticides, such as bromethalin and zinc phosphide, have no antidote.

- According to the American Association of Poison Control Centers, 8,300 rodenticide exposures in humans were reported in 2023. Nearly 94% of these were classified as unintentional and **70% of rodenticide poisonings involve children under age 6.**

Companion animals can be poisoned by eating rodent bait that looks or smells like food or by consuming poisoned rodents, leading to symptoms like internal bleeding, vomiting, seizures, paralysis, and death.

- Rodenticides are on the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) Animal Poison Control Center's **Top 10 list of pet toxins** and ASPCA data show they were implicated in nearly 32,000 pet poisoning calls in 2024.

The Solution: Restrict Rodenticides, Use Safer Alternatives
Fortunately, there are nonlethal, more effective, and safer alternatives to chemical rodent poisons.

When human spaces are made less attractive and inviting, rodents will often stay away.
The first line of defense against human-rodent conflict should be exclusion and prevention:

- ☐ **Securely contain human food** and keep food prep areas clean
- ☐ **Seal openings to buildings** through interior and exterior walls, foundations, doors, vents, porches, attics, and around plumbing
- ☐ **Trim down ivy, cover plants, and overgrown vegetation near buildings** to prevent rodents from taking shelter in them
- ☐ **Don't leave out bird seed, pet food, or garbage** that attracts rodents
- ☐ **Learn how to coexist with the best natural rodent control:** wild carnivores like coyotes, foxes, owls, and hawks (visit projectcoyote.org/downloadable-resources)

Rodenticide Fact Sheet

Rodenticide Video

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If removal is necessary, live trapping may be considered, and emerging rodent contraceptives (birth control) like Evolve and ContraPest show promise where available.