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16 Myths About Rat Poison

...and the short answers, with the studies to back them up.

MYTH: “The bait is locked in a secure box — nothing else can get to it.”
The rat eats and walks out — the poison travels in the rat. Spilled bait also coats insects that carry it out of the box.

MYTH: “The owls around here are fine — I see them all the time.”
Marco Island testing of dead burrowing owls: 55 of 59 had rat poison in their systems (Coastal Breeze News, 2025). Looking fine is not testing clean.

MYTH: “They eat the bait and go outside to die.”
They die where they are — often inside walls and attics. The dead-animal smell people fear is poison's signature, not sealing's.

MYTH: “The box is always empty — the bait must be working.”
An empty box measures the buffet, not the building. Rats commute to the food; the house stays exactly as open as before.

MYTH: “Poison is the humane option — trapping seems cruel.”
Anticoagulants take days of internal bleeding. Exclusion — out a one-way door, no way back — harms nothing at all.

MYTH: “Peppermint oil, mothballs, or an ultrasonic plug-in will keep them out.”
A smell is not a wall. UC IPM: ultrasonic devices aren't effective; rodents habituate to all of it.

MYTH: “Just get a cat — cats keep the rats away.”
Watched 79 days at a ~150-rat colony, cats killed 2 rats (Frontiers 2018). The rats just got better at hiding.

MYTH: “Put up an owl box and the owls will handle it.”
Owls hunt outside; rats live in the walls. Predation can't seal a building — and poisoned rats poison the owls.

MYTH: “If you seal the house, they'll die in the walls and stink.”
Exclusion is sequenced: inspect, one-way doors, verify empty, then seal. Nothing is ever sealed in.

MYTH: “It's all EPA-regulated — used as directed, it must be safe.”
'Legal' describes the paperwork. Hawks tested 100% positive and eagles 82% under the current rules.

MYTH: “If we stop the poison, the rats will just move into our homes.”
Rats don't live in the box — they commute to it. A sealed building takes no immigrants, whatever the neighbors do.

MYTH: “Our product is the safest available — it only targets rats.”
No poison targets a species; blood clotting is shared biology. Sealing a gap to 1/4 inch is the targeted method.

MYTH: “The state requires us to keep a monthly pest service.”
Florida licenses pest-control companies (Ch. 482). No law requires a home or HOA to buy monthly rodenticide service.

MYTH: “Dry ice just puts burrowing rats to sleep.”
CO2 suffocates — and the empty burrow remains for the next rats. A shovel removes in minutes what took weeks to dig.

MYTH: “Expanding foam will plug the holes.”
Rodents chew foam easily. A real seal is hardware cloth or metal — foam alone is a marked doorway.

MYTH: “When we cancel, the company takes the boxes away.”
Stations are often left behind, poison included — one building had them from four companies. Get removal in writing before you sign.

Every answer here is backed by a linked, peer-reviewed study or labeled field experience. **Read the full answers — and send us the argument you just heard — at nopoisonhere.org/answers**