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Is that a Mouse in Your House?

Nation's oldest poison center offers rodent removal and prevention safety tips

As much of the state settles into cooler temperatures that fall brings, rodents are making their move indoors, seeking warmer shelter and food. While people often look to control a rodent situation through the use of rodent bait (poison), the Illinois Poison Center (IPC) is cautioning the public to use a multi-pronged pest control approach to help prevent accidental exposure to rodent poison.

In 2018, the IPC fielded 325 exposures related to rodent poison; 321 exposures in 2017 and 327 exposures in 2016. Nationally more than 9,000 exposures were managed by poison control centers last year.

“Rodent bait is commonly left unattended and unsecured, increasing the likelihood of an exposure to it,” says Michael Wahl, M.D., medical director, IPC. “Rodent poisons only should be used as a last resort. Environmental issues, like open garbage cans, spilled birdseed and leaky faucets, also should be addressed to help mitigate the cause of a rodent outbreak.”

The IPC offers a few tips to help eliminate unwanted home invaders:

- Identify the rodent. Not all rodents respond to the same pest control methods;
- Inspect your home and seal any cracks and crevices;
- Keep your landscaping trimmed and clutter free;
- Remove any plastic and cardboard containers which are easy for rodents to chew through; and
- Determine your rodent removal approach.

There are many products on the market to deter and safely eliminate rodents. If you choose to use rodent bait as your approach, the IPC suggests that you:

- Carefully read and follow the instructions and safety precautions;
- Keep bait away from the sight and reach of children and pets;
- Use conservatively; and
- Call the IPC at 800-222-1222 for anyone exposed or potentially exposed to rodent poison.

More information from the IPC on rodent bait safety is available here:
<https://www.illinoispoisoncenter.org/rodent-bait-safety>.

IPC experts are available to provide information and treatment advice 24 hours per day, 365 days per year, including holidays. If you suspect that you or someone you know has been exposed to a potentially harmful substance, please call the IPC at 800-222-1222. The call is free and confidential. For more information, visit the IPC's website: <http://illinoispoisoncenter.org>.

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The Illinois Poison Center is a nonprofit health service that provides the people of Illinois with comprehensive and trusted information and treatment advice on potentially harmful substances via a free, confidential 24-hour helpline staffed by specially trained physicians, nurses and pharmacists.