

DIAGNOSTIC & TREATMENT UPDATE FOR THE REHABILITATION OF INSECTIVOROUS BATS

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ADHESIVES AND CONTAMINATES

Bats occasionally become stuck in “No Roost,” a petroleum product used to prevent birds from nesting in chimneys and buildings. Bat can also come in contact with fly paper, roofing tar, oil, paint, caulk or similar substances. It is important to keep the bat warm before, during, and after the contaminant has been removed. A bat covered with contaminants can be stressed and physically unstable; do not bath or administer injectable medications until it appears alert and responsive.

1. First remove contaminants and debris from the nose, mouth, and eyes. Use magnification and a plastic dental pick to gently remove substances from the nostrils. Use gauze or a cotton swab to remove debris from the mouth, and clean the eyes with a soft cloth.
2. Next, for oil-based contaminants, administer 0.05ml of activated charcoal solution orally.
3. Then, feed the bat as much of the blended mealworm mixture as it will consume (see Section II) . Encourage the bat to eat by gently placing small amounts of blended food in its mouth. Wait for the bat to swallow before offering another bite. (Food will help to absorb oil or adhesive that may be in the digestive tract.)
4. After feeding, administer 0.05 ml of Pepto-Bismol® orally.
5. Use cotton swabs soaked in mineral oil or cooking oil to detach bats from fly paper or sticky traps. To remove adhesives such as tar, paint, or caulk, clip the fur in the affected area with surgical or manicure scissors, being careful not to cut the skin. Much of the contaminant can be removed in this way.
6. Next, bath the bat in a small bowl of warm water with a mild detergent, such as Dawn® dishwashing liquid, as described in the bathing and grooming section of *Captive Care and Medical Reference for the Rehabilitation of Insectivorous Bats*. Be careful not to get water in the bat’s mouth or nose. If necessary, the bat can be held under a gentle stream (trickle) of warm faucet water to speed the bathing process. Several washes may be needed to completely remove the substance from the fur and wing membranes. The bat should be thoroughly rinsed and dried after each washing and allowed to rest between washings. After bathing, the bat should be wrapped in a soft cloth and kept free from drafts.
7. After the bat has been bathed and appears responsive, it should be rehydrated. **Do not give injections to a bat that appears “shocky” or otherwise unstable.**

Bats that have had contact with contaminants should remain in captivity for at least two weeks prior to release.

NOTE: Because they frequently ingest these substances as they attempt to groom them from their bodies, bats sometimes die from poisoning or intestinal blockage even after the contaminate has been removed.