

Information Sheet

Pesticide Safety

Pesticides are chemicals that kill pests in your home or garden, on your pets, or on you. Three most common types are:



- ***Insecticides***—products that kill insects. Examples include garden bug sprays or dusts, roach spray, indoor flea “foggers,” and flea collars for pets.
- ***Herbicides***—weed killers
- ***Rodenticides***—rat and mouse poisons



Pesticides can be helpful, but they can be dangerous if used carelessly or if they are not stored properly. A 2004 survey by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) revealed that almost half -- 47% -- of all households with children under the age of five had at least one pesticide stored in an unlocked cabinet, less than 4 feet off the ground, easily within reach of children.

Why are pesticides dangerous?

Pesticides can cause harm if swallowed, through contact with the skin, or if sprayed or splashed in the eyes. In 2006, The Blue Ridge Poison Center at the UVA Health System received over 1,250 calls about pesticide poisonings.

Nationwide, pesticides are a leading cause of poisoning in all age groups.

How do pesticides make you sick?

Any of the following may be symptoms of pesticide poisoning:



- ♦ Skin redness, swelling, blistering, or itching.
- ♦ Stinging or swelling of the eyes, nose, mouth, or throat.
- ♦ Difficulty breathing.
- ♦ Nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramping, or drooling.
- ♦ Excessive fatigue, headache, or muscle cramps.

How can I protect myself & my family?

Labels protect us! The label provides information for the safe use, storage, and disposal of pesticides. It also lists all of the *active ingredients*, or chemicals, so if there is an exposure health care workers can provide the proper treatment.



To Safely Use Pesticides:

- Keep all pesticides in their original, labeled containers.
- Keep all pesticides locked out of the sight and reach of children.
- Read the label every time you use the product. Follow the instructions exactly.
- Do not assume that using twice as much product will do twice the job.
- When using pesticides, wear protective clothing or eyewear if the label calls for it to prevent skin and eye exposure. Caution: leather gloves or shoes may absorb pesticides, which may then be absorbed into your skin.
- Measure, mix, and use pesticides in a well-ventilated area away from children and pets.

- Keep the toll-free number to the Poison Center near every phone: 1-800-222-1222.



NOTE: Never apply a pesticide to your skin to prevent mosquito bites. Use a mosquito repellent specifically designed for that purpose and follow the label's instructions. Mosquito repellents do not kill mosquitos, instead they discourage mosquitos from biting us.

For more information about pesticides, consult the National Pesticide Information Center (NPIC) at 1-800-858-7378 or visit <http://www.npic.orst.edu/gen.htm>.

If someone accidentally swallows a pesticide, or gets the product in their eyes or on their skin, contact the **Blue Ridge Poison Center: 1-800-222-1222**.

Bring the label of the product with you to the phone.

Our medical experts are standing by 24 hours a day, year-round, to offer free and confidential advice.