



U.S. EPA Region 7

Protect Your Family From Pesticide Exposure

www.epa.gov/safepestcontrol



Pesticides and Pests



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 7 is working with the Missouri Department of Agriculture, state health agencies, local nonprofits, and community leaders in Springfield, Missouri, to raise awareness about safe pesticide use in and around homes.

Pesticides are substances used to control pests. Well-known pesticides include insecticides, herbicides, rodenticides and fungicides. Lesser-known pesticides include disinfectants, attractants, plant defoliants, swimming pool treatments, and plant growth regulators.

Pesticides are used to control various pests and disease carriers. Infectious diseases such as West Nile virus, Lyme disease, and rabies can be carried and spread by pests such as mosquitoes, ticks and rodents. Indoor household pests such as cockroaches can contribute to asthma and allergies. Pesticides are also used in agriculture to control weeds, insect infestation, and diseases. While pesticides have benefits for society and can be powerful tools for controlling pests, they are also inherently toxic and can severely harm children's health if stored or used improperly.

Sources of Pesticide Exposure

Pesticides can be applied in indoor structures such as homes, schools, and day care centers, and used in outdoor applications such as farming/agricultural, gardening, and yard/lawn care. Children are exposed to pesticides from different sources (such as residues on toys, household items, school and day care furniture) and through different pathways (such as air, food, water, dust and soil).

Babies and young children can also be more highly exposed to pesticides, because they often put their hands and other objects into their mouths that can have residue from pesticide applications on them.





Protect Your Family from Pesticide Exposure

In general, pesticide exposure and its effects can be reduced by:

- Washing hands after playing outside and before meals
- Regularly cleaning floors and other surfaces
- Regularly washing children's hands, bottles, pacifiers and toys
- Removing shoes or wiping soil from shoes before entering your home
- Hiring a certified pesticide applicator for pesticide applications
- Reducing exposure by washing work/hobby clothes separate from children's clothes or changing at work prior to coming home



Keep These Common Pesticides out of the Reach of Children and Pets



- Bath and kitchen disinfectants and sanitizers and bleach
- Products used to kill mold or mildew
- Roach sprays and baits
- Insect repellents
- Rat and other rodent poisons
- Weed killers
- Flea and tick shampoos, powders and dips for pets
- Swimming pool chemicals

Useful Tips to Poison-Proof Your Home

Child-proofing

- Lock up all pesticides and harmful products in a cabinet, out of a child's reach.
- Install safety latches on cabinets.
- Crawl around on your hands and knees to see if you've missed any potential dangers from your child's viewpoint.

Pesticide labels

- Protect your pets and children by carefully following label directions and precautions.
- Follow the directions as they are written on the label when using a product.

Pesticide containers

- Keep pesticides in their original containers.
- Never put poisonous products in containers that could be mistaken for food or drinks.
- Use child-resistant packaging correctly by tightly sealing the container after every use.
- Re-close a pesticide package if ever interrupted during application (e.g., phone call, doorbell, etc.).
- Make sure the container is completely out of children's reach.

Other tips

- Alert all caregivers about the potential dangers of pesticides and share these tips with them.
- Some pesticides are poisonous and should not be touched.
- Pesticides used to control fleas and ticks on your pets can be transferred to your children. Always read and follow label directions.





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Integrated Pest Management

IPM is the process of using an environmentally friendly, common-sense approach to controlling pests. The focus is on pest prevention and using pesticides only as needed.

- Keep pests out by sealing exterior gaps that allow for pest entry.
- Eliminate food and water sources for pests.
- Pests need food and water to survive. Practice good sanitation and repair leaks to reduce pest presence.
- Monitor for pests so you can address problems early.
- Treat existing pest problems using traps, vacuums, gels and baits. If pesticides are necessary, use spot treatments rather than area-wide applications.

Certified Pesticide Applicators

Any business or individual who is paid to perform pesticide applications must employ or be a state-certified applicator. Examples of the types of firms include residential pesticide application businesses (pest control and lawn care) and agricultural pesticide application businesses (agricultural services and aerial applicators).

Find a state-certified firm at:
<https://go.usa.gov/x646w>

The Missouri Department of Agriculture is responsible for implementing the pesticide program in Missouri. If you or your property has been impacted from a pesticide application you can file a complaint by visiting:

<https://agriculture.mo.gov/plants/pesticides/licensing.php>



EPA Contact Information

If you have any questions, please contact:

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Post the Poison Control Center's national hotline phone number, 1-800-222-1222, near every phone and program it into your cell phone.