

Think Twice About Using Pesticides!

☠ A 1992 nationwide study conducted by EPA revealed that almost half (approximately 47 percent) of surveyed households with children under the age of 5 had at least one pesticide stored within their reach.

☠ In 1993, an estimated 80,000 children were exposed to or poisoned by a household pesticide product that was used or stored incorrectly.

☠ Pets may also suffer from pesticide exposure and may contribute to human exposure by, for instance, tracking lawn and garden pesticides into the house.

☠ Many pesticide products are stored, handled, applied, or disposed of improperly.

☠ Pesticides are often stored in places where flooding is possible and leak or spill into wells, drains, ground water, or surface water.

☠ Pesticides poured down the sink, into the toilet, or down a sewer or street drain may interfere with the operation of wastewater treatment systems or pollute waterways.

☠ Many municipal systems are not equipped to remove all pesticide residues.

☠ Children may mistake pesticides for something to eat or drink.

☠ An empty pesticide container can be hazardous because of residues left inside.

☠ When a pressurized container like an aerosol is punctured or burned it could explode.

☠ Pesticides can be harmful to wildlife, plants, wetlands and water.

☠ People often buy more pesticides than they need.

☠ People often store pesticides in unlocked areas in reach of children and pets and in unventilated areas.

**The Westchester County
Department of Health
recommends the use
of the least toxic
alternatives for
pesticide control.**

Adapted from the
Environmental Protection Bureau
*Citizen's Guide to Pest Control and
Pesticide Safety*

Westchester
gov.com

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Pesticide Cautions

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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What are Pesticides?

Pesticides are chemical or biological substances designed to kill, control or repel a variety of living organisms such as insects (insecticides), weeds (herbicides), mold or fungus (fungicides) and rodents (rodenticides). Pesticides are widely used in and around our homes, schools, work places and recreational areas. They are poisons.

When pesticides are registered by the EPA, does this mean they are safe?

No, nor can anyone give that assurance. All pesticides are poisons and may cause adverse health effects. Pesticides are designed to destroy or control living organisms. All pesticides are associated with some risk of harm to human health or the environment.

Scientists and regulators know too little about pesticides and people's exposure to pesticides to offer assurances about pesticide safety.

EPA registration is not a consumer product safety program. In fact, federal law prohibits manufacturers from making claims that EPA registration of their products means they are safe. Many of the pesticides used in homes were licensed before 1978. They have not been subjected to the more stringent guidelines set by Congress in 1978 for new pesticides.

How are people exposed to pesticides in and around the home?

One of the greatest causes of pesticide exposure to humans is the use of pesticides in and around the home. Pesticides can be absorbed through the skin, swallowed or inhaled. Exposure may come from contact with treated grass or from mists or sprays during application. Or, exposures may come indirectly from food, drink or household items contaminated by the application.

These common household products are pesticides:

- ☠ Kitchen, laundry and bath disinfectants and sanitizers, including bleach.
- ☠ Products to kill mold and mildew.
- ☠ Lawn and garden products such as weed killers.
- ☠ Flea and tick sprays, powders and pet collars.
- ☠ Termite control products.
- ☠ Rat and other rodent poisons.
- ☠ Insect repellants for personal use.
- ☠ Insect sprays and wasp repellants for indoor use.
- ☠ Cockroach sprays and baits.
- ☠ Swimming pool chemicals, including those that kill algae.
- ☠ Repellants that keep deer, raccoons or rabbits away from your garden.

What do we know about the potential health effects of pesticides commonly used in and around our homes?

Pesticides may cause acute health effects (like skin irritation or respiratory distress) which occur shortly after exposure and chronic health effects (like cancer or reproductive problems) which may not be apparent until months or years after exposure. Two pesticides commonly used in lawn care, maneb and chlorthalonil, have been identified by the EPA as probable carcinogens (cancer-causing agents).

Several chemicals used as active ingredients in insecticide products for indoor use are toxic to the nervous system. These include chlorpyrifos (Dursban), phoxim (Baythion), n-methyl carbamate (Propoxur) and diazinon. EPA lists propoxur as a probable human carcinogen and dichlorvos (a poison used in pest strips) and carbaryl (used for fleas and ticks on pets) as possible human carcinogens.