

Protecting Yourself and Your Family From Pesticides



On The Job

- If you are mixing or applying pesticides, do not smoke, eat, drink or use the toilet without first washing hands with soap and warm water.
- Use protective equipment such as safety glasses or goggles and respirators or masks to cover your nose and mouth. Facial hair can prevent masks and goggles from fitting properly.
- Wear long pants made from denim and long-sleeved shirts on the job. This will offer adequate protection for handling granular and dry pesticides. Liquid pesticides require more protection, and disposable coveralls should be requested to protect your personal clothing from being contaminated.
- Do not wear shoes and boots made from leather, cotton or canvas, as they can easily absorb chemicals. Shoes should be made from rubber or plastic to protect your feet as you walk on pesticide-treated lawns.
- Do not wear cotton, canvas or leather gloves as they can easily absorb chemicals. Mid-forearm or elbow-length gloves made of rubber or plastic are required. Do not put contaminated hands into gloves.
- If possible, do not wear contact lenses when handling pesticides to prevent injury to your eyes.

Pesticides can make you sick from breathing them, absorbing them through your skin or accidentally swallowing them.

Pesticide products with a "danger" or "warning" label can cause serious illnesses. Avoid making any direct contact with these products.

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When You Go Home

- Leave shoes or boots OUTSIDE. Remove (if possible) and shake contaminated work clothes outdoors to remove pesticide dusts or residues. Pesticides tracked in on shoes or boots contaminate floors and carpeting where children and pets play.
- Take a long hot shower using good bar soap and a washcloth. Wash your hair thoroughly. Put on clean clothes.
- Do not let your family (especially young children or pregnant women) come into contact with your contaminated clothing. Keep it separate and in a closed plastic bag until you wash it.
- NEVER wash your contaminated clothes with the family laundry. Wash contaminated clothing in hot water with a heavy-duty liquid detergent. Use the highest water level and put it through two complete cycles or at least two rinse cycles. To ensure clothing is cleaned thoroughly, avoid overloading washer. NEVER USE BLEACH as it could cause a dangerous chemical reaction with the pesticides. If possible, dry clothing outdoors on a sunny day.

Children and pregnant women are especially at risk for health problems caused by pesticide exposure. Learn and practice simple steps that will minimize the risks and help protect your family and yourself.

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Environmental Education