



Keep your family safe when using pesticides

Protecting ourselves and our children from the effects of pesticides is important.

Many of the products we use on a regular basis contain pesticides, from swimming pool sanitizers to insect repellents, mothballs, and flea protection products for pets. Although all pesticides can pose some risk, the level of risk depends on how toxic the pesticide is, and how much exposure occurs.

Children may be more susceptible to pesticide exposure than adults because:

- infants take more breaths per minute and have more skin surface compared to their body weight
- babies and children often spend more time closer to the ground, in contact with carpets, baseboards and lawns, which puts them at a greater risk of breathing in pesticide dust that may be present
- infants and children are also more likely to put their fingers, toys and other objects, which may have come in contact with a pesticide, in their mouths

Before using a pesticide

Ask yourself if the pest you want to control is harmful, and whether its numbers pose a real problem. Certain insects like lady beetles that feed on mites, and lacewings that eat aphids, can be beneficial.

Consider if there are physical control methods that might work to get rid of a pest problem. For example:

- reduce clutter
- seal areas where pests enter the building
- keep premises free of trash and overgrown vegetation
- redirect water away from a building or field to avoid standing water where [mosquitoes](#) could breed

Using pesticides

There are many pesticides available for domestic use, but dealing with certain pests, like [bedbugs](#), is best left to a licensed pest control operator.

If not used, stored or disposed of properly, pesticides can harm you or your children. If you choose to use pesticides, you are responsible for [using them safely](#).

When buying a pesticide:

- Choose only products that have been registered by Health Canada.
 - You can identify these products by the Pest Control Product (PCP) number on the label.
 - You can search the [Pesticide Label Database](#) to find the right product, from your computer or mobile phone.
- Make sure you buy a product that includes the name of the pest you are trying to control on the label.
- Only buy the amount of the product needed for the treatment.



[Avoid buying pesticides over the Internet](#) because these pesticides may not contain the necessary precautions or instructions which could lead to accidental misuse or injury, and may not be approved for use in Canada.

Never attempt to make your own [homemade pesticides](#) since this practice can result in risks to your health and the safety of others, as well as the environment.

When using a pesticide:

- Use a pesticide only for the purpose stated on the label. For example, never use a pesticide indoors when it is intended for outdoor use only.
- Only use the amount of product needed for the treatment.
- Always read, understand and follow all the label directions and precautions.
- Never mix different pesticides together, unless the instructions tell you to do so.
- Store pesticides in their original container and out of sight and reach of children.

Protecting you and your children from pesticides

To reduce exposure to you and your children when pesticides are used:

- Keep children out of treated areas while pesticides are being applied, and until areas are dry.
 - Read the label to find out when it is safe to enter the treated area. If you are unsure of the recommended time, stay away from the area until it is dry.
 - For indoor pesticide uses, ventilate your home before returning.
- Read the label on [insect repellents](#) before buying them. Many of them, such as those that contain DEET or Icaridin, may not be used on young children, depending upon their age.
- Make sure any baits are in locked bait stations, safely out of reach of children.
- Never remove mothballs from their original sachet or use them outside of sealed, airtight containers. Children could mistake mothballs for candy. Never use mothballs outdoors.
- If you apply flea and/or tick products to your pet, be sure to keep children from touching the pet until the product has completely dried.

Other ways of reducing pesticide exposure to you and your children include:

- Wash fruits and vegetables under running water before eating them.
- If you hire a pest control company or lawn service, talk to them about the products they are using and any precautions.
- If your lawn or carpeting has recently been treated, consider using shoes, blankets or some other barrier between the treated surface and children's skin.
- If someone in the household works with pesticides, wash and dry their work clothes separate from the family laundry.
- Make sure that the type of wood you burn in an outdoor fire pit or campfire is not [treated wood](#). Some types of treated wood can release harmful chemicals into the air when burned.



Pesticide spray drift

When pesticides are used according to the label, [pesticide residues from spray drift](#) are not a concern for the people using them or for bystanders. If you have concerns, you can report incidents of spray drift to your provincial or territorial government.

If someone is spraying pesticides near your home, you may choose to take extra safety steps like:

- keep away from the area being sprayed
- keep kids indoors
- remove and/or cover outdoor toys and eating areas
- close windows
- make sure people remove their shoes when they come indoors so they are not tracking in any pesticide residue
- wash any toys that have come into contact with pesticides

If you intend to spray a pesticide on your property, it is a good practice to let your neighbours know so they can decide whether to take the same precautions.

In case of poisoning

If you require immediate medical attention, call 911. If you or your child experiences symptoms, consult the First Aid instructions on the product label and contact your health care provider or your provincial [Poison Control Centre](#).

When you call the Poison Control (Information) Centre, you need to know the name of the product, the amount taken, and the time of the incident.

Take the pesticide container or label with you to the emergency facility or physician.

Report health and safety concerns

Report any adverse events to the manufacturer, who is required by law to report it to Health Canada. Contact information can be found on the product label. You may also report an incident for products with a Pest Control Product (PCP) number directly to Health Canada by completing an [incident report form](#).

For more information

For information on how to deal with common household pests like spiders, bedbugs, ants, cockroaches and mice, visit the [Pest Control Tips](#).

For more information on how to manage lawn weeds and pests, consult the [Healthy Lawns](#) series.

For specific tips on how to use pesticides indoors and outdoors around the home, you can consult the [Homeowner Guidelines for Using Pesticides](#).

For more information on how pesticides are registered in Canada, consult [The Regulation of Pesticides in Canada](#).