

WHAT IS A PESTICIDE?

Pesticides are chemical compounds which include insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, and rodenticides.

Commercial pesticides are formulations which are designed to kill insect, plant, fungal and animal pests in agricultural and domestic applications.

Pesticides used in Canada must be government-registered, but this is no guarantee of their safety. Pesticides are manufactured and sold because of their lethal effects. Pesticide formulas are protected from consumer scrutiny by Trade Secrets legislation.

Pesticides may contain seemingly low percentages of the 'active' ingredient intended to eradicate the pest, but the so-called 'inert' formulations are designed to enhance the deadly effects of the active ingredients, and are frequently found to be the 'active' ingredients in other pesticide products.

Pesticides are commonly used in combination, so the chemical effects of one product can be greatly magnified by another. Pesticides are not tested in combination, however, by manufacturers or by government agencies who have decided that these products are safe for consumer use.

Provincial Poison Control Centres report receiving more than 1,500 pesticide emergency calls each year.

BEFORE USING A PESTICIDE

1. Identify the pest you want to control.
2. Determine if you can tolerate it.
3. Must it be completely exterminated?
4. Try non-toxic alternatives first.

SYMPTOMS OF PESTICIDE POISONING

Exposure to low doses of pesticide residues usually results in only mild symptoms of poisoning: rashes, headaches, dizziness, irritability or mild asthma attacks.

Contact with a fresh application of pesticide spray on lawns and in parks may result in one or more of the following:

-REDNESS, ITCHING, SWELLING or BLISTERING of skin which has come into contact with pesticide chemicals.

-SWELLING and STINGING of mucous membranes in eyes, nose, mouth and throat due to inhaling pesticide vapour.

-SHORTNESS OF BREATH, RAPID BREATHING or HEAVY SALIVATION, indicating that lungs have been affected.

-NAUSEA, VOMITING, ABDOMINAL CRAMPS or DIARRHEA, which signal that stomach and intestines have been affected.

-RECURRING HEADACHE, CHRONIC FATIGUE, MUSCLE TWITCHING or NUMBNESS, suggesting injury to the nervous system.

Acute pesticide poisoning can result in death.

WHAT TO DO IN A PESTICIDE EMERGENCY

**Call 9-1-1. Get medical help immediately.*

If pesticides have burned the skin:

- Drench skin with cool, running water for 15 minutes or more.
- Remove contaminated clothing & wash thoroughly, separately from other clothing.
- If pesticides have been inhaled:
 - Move victim into an area with fresh, cool air.
 - Tell 911 operator that a respirator is needed.
 - Loosen tight clothing.
 - Administer CPR if victim has stopped breathing.

If eyes are burned by pesticides:

- Hold eyelids open & irrigate eyes with clean, cool, running water for 15 minutes+.
- Transport victim to emergency medical centre.

If pesticides have been swallowed:

- Do not induce vomiting.
- Transport victim to emergency medical centre.

INFORMATION REQUIRED BY POISON & EMERGENCY STAFF:

1. Name of product
2. Amount of product
3. Time of incident