



University of California
San Francisco

Pesticides Matter

Reduce your exposure to toxic pesticides and protect your health and the health of your family





Pesticides are chemicals intended to prevent, control or kill pests, but they can also harm your health. Everyone can be exposed to pesticides everyday at home, at work and through the food they eat.

This brochure provides information on steps you can take to prevent or reduce your exposure to pesticides.

This brochure offers practical recommendations on how to avoid exposure to pesticides that can be harmful to reproductive health. It is not a complete list. For more resources, see: www.prhe.ucsf.edu/prhe/pmbrochurelinks.html

Pesticide exposure is linked to harmful reproductive and developmental health outcomes that can occur throughout the life of both men and women. Exposures to even small amounts of pesticides in the womb or during infancy, childhood or puberty can lead to disease.

The recommendations in this brochure are designed for women, men, and children. They apply to everyone, whether you have children, are pregnant, or plan to have children in the future.

4 Things to Do

- Prevent exposure at home
- Prevent exposure at work
- Don't take your work home with you
- Know your rights





Prevent Exposure at Home

Prevent a pest problem in your home before it happens.

- Fix leaks.
- Put food in tightly sealed containers.
- Seal cracks and holes in walls, floors, and baseboards.
- Keep floors and surfaces clean at all times.

Use the least toxic alternatives to kill bugs.

- Less toxic alternatives to pesticides have been shown to be effective.

Avoid the common household uses of pesticides.

On your pets:

- Do not use chemical tick-and-flea collars, flea baths, or “dips” on your pets or use “flea bombs” in the home. Wash pets and their bedding frequently to keep fleas away.

With your family:

- Do not use products that contain the toxic pesticide lindane for treatment of lice and scabies. According to the US EPA, combing is the most important aspect of head lice control.

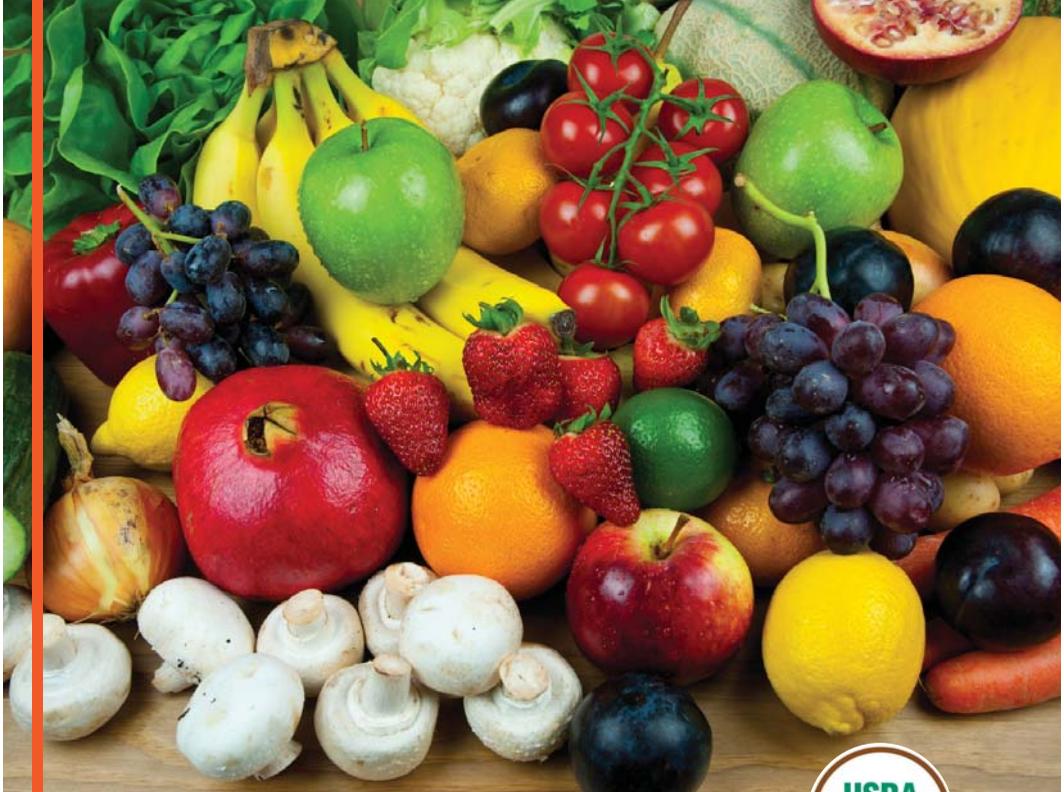
In your yard:

- Avoid using pesticides on lawns and in the garden. Children playing outdoors can be directly exposed and pets can track the chemicals into the house on their fur.

If using pesticides:

- Choose less dangerous forms of pest control such as baits, traps, or gels instead of sprays, dusts or pest strips.
- Keep all pesticides out of the reach of children.
- Avoid “preventive” scheduled pesticide applications and use only licensed professionals.

For more information on less dangerous pesticides, and alternatives to pesticides for gardening and pest related problems, see:
www.prhe.ucsf.edu/prhe/pmbrochurelinks.html#home



Eat local, organic food when you can.

It reduces an individual's exposure to pesticides and organic farming reduces our global exposure to pesticides in water, air and soil. To find organic food in your community:

- Shop at local farmers' markets.
- Grow your own organic food in your yard or join a community garden to grow food with neighbors. Be sure to test the soil for lead first.
- Join a local organic Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) system. These systems are efficient and grow food in ways that protect our health and the environment.

For more information on avoiding pesticides in your food, see:
www.prhe.ucsf.edu/prhe/pmbrochurelinks.html#food

Avoid the top twelve most contaminated fruits and vegetables.

- Choose the least contaminated produce.
- The Environmental Working Group's Shoppers Guide to Pesticides can help you choose the safest options.

Always peel non-organic fruits and vegetables.

- All fruits and vegetables, including organic, should be washed before eating.

Limit foods with high animal fat content.

- Pesticides can build up in high animal fat foods such as meat, cheese and dairy products.





Prevent Exposure at Work

- Do not enter areas that have recently been treated with pesticides.
- Keep pesticides off your skin. Wear long-sleeved shirts and pants for protection.
- Use respiratory protection when required.
- Do not bring food into treated areas.
- Wash hands before eating, drinking and smoking.

Don't Take The Workplace Home

- Do not use water in drainage ditches for drinking, bathing, swimming or fishing.
- Remove work shoes before entering the home.
- Change clothes and shower if possible before entering the house and/or playing with children.
- Store and wash work clothes separately from family clothes.
- Never take pesticide containers home.
- Keep pesticides out of the home.

For more information about staying safe at work, see:

www.prhe.ucsf.edu/prhe/pmbrochurelinks.html#workplace



Know Your Rights

Worker Protection Standards (WPS) is a regulation aimed at reducing the risk of pesticide poisonings and injuries among agricultural workers and pesticide handlers. The WPS contains requirements for:

- Pesticide safety training.
- Notification of pesticide applications.
- Use of personal protective equipment.
- Restricted entry interval after pesticide application.
- Decontamination supplies.
- Emergency medical supplies.

For more information about the WPS, see:
www.prhe.ucsf.edu/prhe/pmbrochurelinks.html
#rights





If you do not work directly with pesticides, you can still be exposed in the workplace, such as parks, schools, hospitals or other treated buildings.

- Get information from your employer about pesticide applications in your workplace. Employers are required by law to provide this information.
- Ask your employer about safer alternatives to pesticides. Follow guidelines to avoid exposure. Request action from the employer to correct hazards or violations.
- File a complaint with the regional Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) office if you believe that OSHA standards are being violated.

For more information about OSHA, see:
www.prhe.ucsf.edu/prhe/pmbrochurelinks.html#rights



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FASTEP is an alliance of academic, governmental and non-governmental partners spanning the fields of reproductive, environmental, occupational and pediatric health and toxicology. Our goal is to secure each and everyone's right to optimal reproductive health by fostering environments that prevent exposure to toxic substances and support healthy pregnancies, children, adults and future generations.

Magee-Womens Hospital of UPMC



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