



**MINISTRY OF HEALTH
CHEMISTRY, FOOD AND DRUGS DIVISION
PESTICIDES AND TOXIC CHEMICALS CONTROL BOARD**

How to Reduce Pesticides in your Home

Choosing the products you buy

Whenever possible, buy products that are free of pesticides.

When purchasing products, take a minute to **carefully read the label for:**

- **Directions:** Be sure to follow instructions and use the correct amount of a product
- **Ingredients:** Look for products that appear to disclose all their ingredients.
- The words **caution, warning** and **danger** indicate that the product's ingredients are harmful.

Choose the least hazardous product to do the job.

Remember, you won't get twice the results by using twice as much.

Choose pump spray containers instead of aerosols. Pressurized aerosol products often produce a finer mist that is more easily inhaled. Aerosols also put unnecessary volatile organic chemicals into your indoor air when you use them.

Keeping your house clean

Remove your shoes when you enter your house. Your shoes can track in harmful amounts of pesticides, lead, cadmium and other chemicals. Keeping a floor mat at your doors for people to wipe their feet on when they enter will also help.

Vacuum carpets and floors regularly. Children playing on your carpet may actually be more exposed to pesticides lodged in the carpet than from the outside, because pesticides break down less readily indoors than outdoors in the sunlight.

Single-ingredient, common household materials such as baking soda, vinegar, or plant-based soaps and detergents can often do the job on your carpet or other surfaces. Soap and water has been shown to keep surfaces as free of bacteria as antibacterial soaps do.

Baking soda works well to clean sinks, tubs and toilets, and it freshens drains as well. Vegetable oil with a little lemon juice works wonders on wood furniture.

Simmer a mixture of cloves and cinnamon or use vinegar and water as a safe and environmentally friendly air freshener. Consider how you can eliminate odor problems rather than just covering them up.

Use vinegar and water in a pump spray bottle for cleaning mirrors and shining chrome. Vinegar or soap and water with drying rags or a squeegee also work well for cleaning windows.

Use reusable unbleached cotton towels, rags, and non-scratch scrubbing sponges for all-purpose cleaning instead of bleached disposable paper products.

Use dishwasher detergents that are free of chlorine bleach and lowest in phosphates. Use bathroom cleaners that are free of aerosol propellants and antibacterial agents.

Reducing pesticides in the yard

- Use natural pesticides where possible, e.g. garlic, pepper, neem, marigold, and chrysanthemums.
- Ask at your garden store for less-toxic alternatives to chemical pesticides to control pests.
- Apply Integrated Pest Management techniques.
- Consult your County Agricultural Extension Office.

What you eat

Choose fruits and vegetables grown organically whenever possible. They have been shown to have less pesticide residue.

Eat a variety of foods, from a variety of sources. This will give you a better mix of nutrients and reduce your likelihood of exposure to a single pesticide.

Wash and scrub all fruits and vegetables thoroughly under running water to remove fertilizer residues, bacteria and traces of chemicals from the surface and dirt from the crevices.

Peel fruits and vegetables when possible, discard outer leaves of leafy vegetables. Trim fat from meat and skin from poultry and fish because some pesticide residue collects in fat.

Don't microwave foods in plastic containers. Chemicals from the plastic container can become absorbed by food during microwaving. Cover with waxed paper or paper towel instead of plastic wrap to keep food from spattering.

Controlling pests

In order to survive, pests need food, water and living space. Remove all food sources through good sanitation and storage habits (i.e., screw-cap jars, zip-lock bags, garbage pails with tight-fitting lids).

Block pest entrances to your kitchen by caulking holes, using door sweeps on the bottom of doors, and installing window screens.

Avoid placing pesticides around your kitchen to kill indoor insect and rodent pests. Use non-toxic head lice treatments, including combing, enzyme-based treatments and mayonnaise or oil.

Avoid mothballs that contain p-dichloro benzene or naphthalene, which are very toxic and also contribute to respiratory problems. When storing clothing, use cedar blocks or bags of cedar chips hung with your clothes.

Consult your veterinarian for non-toxic pest control products for use on pet pests such as fleas and ticks. Flea and tick shampoos are pesticidal products that kill fleas and ticks on your pet. These products contain a low concentration of insecticide that should control the fleas and ticks without harming your pet if used properly

Storage

- Store product in such a manner as to eliminate access to children and pets. Pets can knock products off shelves. Children can ingest them.
- Store pesticides 4 feet off the ground, preferably in a locked and labeled cabinet.
- **Do not put pesticides in soft-drink bottles or other containers**
- Store products in their original containers with labels that list ingredients, directions for use, and treatment in case of accidental poisoning.
- Apply transparent tape over the label to keep it legible.
- **Never store pesticides with food or medical supplies.**
- Keep your pesticide storage area dry and well ventilated.
- Check pesticide containers periodically for leaks, corrosion, breaks, tears, or rust.