

MAFES Dawg Tracks



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Handling Pesticides Safely



Despite what many of us may think, no substance is inherently safe or unsafe. Any substance, even the most innocuous, can be harmful. Pesticides, by their nature, are designed to be toxic. If accidents or misuse occur, they can cause illnesses or injury. The potential for a pesticide to cause injury depends upon several factors.

- **Toxicity** – This is the potential of a chemical, such as a pesticide to cause harm. Some have a low human toxicity and others have an extreme toxicity.
- **Dose** – The greater the quantity of the chemical exposure, the greater the risk of injury. The size and weight of the person can determine the effect of the dose. The dose could be harmless to an adult, but critical to a small child.
- **Route of Absorption** – The ways the body comes in contact with the chemical is through the skin, mouth or breathing. Swallowing a pesticide usually causes the most problem. In everyday language, the most common route is through the skin.
- **Duration of exposure** – The longer the exposure, the more chemical the body absorbs.
- **Physical and Chemical Properties** – Some pesticides evaporate or breakdown differently.
- **Population at Risk** – The person with the greatest danger of pesticide illness is the person with the most exposure. Consumers who use pesticides may also be overexposed, especially if they fail to follow the manufacturer's directions.

RECOGNIZING PESTICIDE POISONING

Like other chemicals, pesticides can cause external or internal injuries. **External injuries**, caused from pesticide exposure, may result in skin irritation or allergies. The symptoms are redness, itching or pimples. Allergic reactions may cause redness, swelling or blistering. The mucous membranes of the eye, nose, mouth and throat are sensitive to chemicals. Stinging and swelling may occur. **Internal injuries** may occur depending upon where the chemical is transported in the body or what organ is affected.

If there is lung injury, shortness of breath, excessive saliva and rapid breathing may occur. Other symptoms to be aware of are vomiting, nausea, diarrhea, headaches or dizziness.

TREATING PESTICIDE POISONING

Appropriate first aid treatment depends on which pesticides were used. The following are some tips that can help in treating pesticide poisoning, but should not be a substitute for medical advice or treatment.

- **Poison Ivy** – Irrigate the area with running water for approximately 15 minutes. While doing so, call a doctor or the poison control center for further treatment. Discard or wash the contaminated clothing thoroughly and separately from other articles.
- **Poison in Eye** – Open the eyelid and wash the eye slowly and gently with water. Do this for 15 minutes. Call the doctor or poison control center for further help.
- **Inhaled Poison** – Take the victim to fresh air. If they are unconscious, give artificial respiration and get paramedic assistance. Call a doctor or the poison control center for further help.
- **Swallowed Poison** – If the victim is alert and able to swallow, dilute the ingested poison with sips of water or milk. Again, call the doctor or poison control center for help.

After first aid has been administered, it is critical to get medical help immediately. Also call the poison control center, which will be listed in the phone book, usually in the front with other pertinent emergency numbers. It is better to be cautious for the benefit of the victim, if a pesticide problem occurs. Using the proper personal equipment and following the instructions will help to offset the chance of overexposure.

**EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED,
SAFETY SHOULD NEVER BE
NEGLECTED!!!**

**ALERT TODAY~
ALIVE TOMMORROW !!**

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Excerpts: www.cdc.gov/nasdaq/cal.epa

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