



UCSF

# Pesticides Matter

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



This organic farm grows food without the use of toxic pesticides.



**P**esticides are chemicals intended to prevent, control or kill pests, but they can also harm your health. We can all be exposed to pesticides every day at home, at work and through the food we eat.

This brochure offers practical recommendations on how to avoid exposure to toxic pesticides.

For more information and resources to help you follow these recommendations, go to:

[www.prhe.ucsf.edu/prhe/pmbrochurelinks.html](http://www.prhe.ucsf.edu/prhe/pmbrochurelinks.html)

Pesticide exposure can harm reproductive and developmental health throughout the life of both men and women. Exposure 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 or not they have children, are pregnant, or plan to have children in the future.

## 4 Things to Do

- Prevent exposure at home
- Prevent exposure at work
- Protect your community
- Support healthy policies





## Prevent Exposure at Home

### Prevent pest problems:

- Fix leaks.
- Put food in tightly sealed containers.
- Seal cracks and holes in and around walls and floors.
- Keep floors and surfaces clean.

### Avoid the common household uses of pesticides.

- **In your yard:** Avoid using pesticides in your garden.
- **With your family:** Do not use products that contain the toxic pesticide lindane for treatment of lice and scabies.

- **On your pets:** Do not use chemical tick-and-flea collars, baths or “dips.” Do not use “flea bombs” in the home. Wash pets and their bedding frequently.

### Fight pests with alternative methods.

- Check our online resource page for links to lots of pest-specific alternatives.

### If you decide to use pesticides:

- Avoid sprays, dusts and pest strips.
- Keep all pesticides out of the reach of children.
- Avoid “preventive” scheduled pesticide applications.
- Use only licensed professionals.

For more information on safer alternatives to pesticides, see:

[http://bit.ly/AntiPesticidesAtHome.](http://bit.ly/AntiPesticidesAtHome)

### If you work with pesticides, don't bring them home

- Remove work shoes before entering the home.
- Change clothes and shower if possible before entering the house or playing with children.
- Store and wash work clothes separately from family clothes.
- Never take pesticide containers home.
- Keep pesticides out of the home.



## Avoid pesticides in food

- Eat local organic food whenever possible: Buy organic at the store or at local farmers' markets.
- Use your WIC and SNAP/CalFresh EBT card to buy organic food at local farmers' markets. Some markets will double your food stamps through Market Match!
- Join a local Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) system to receive a weekly box of organic produce.
- Grow your own organic food in your yard or a community garden. Be sure to test the soil for lead first.

For more information, visit our resources page:  
<http://bit.ly/AntiPesticidesInFood>.



- If you cannot afford to buy organic, try to avoid the most pesticide-contaminated fruits and vegetables and choose the least contaminated. To tell them apart, visit our online resources page.
- Wash all fruits and vegetables, even organic ones.
- Always peel non-organic fruits and vegetables.
- Many pesticides and other toxic substances accumulate in animal fat. Limit foods that are high in animal fat, like meat and dairy. When you buy these products, choose organic.



Sample organic CSA weekly box.

Pesticide application in a conventional (not organic) farm.



## Prevent Exposure at Work

If you work with pesticides, protect yourself.

- Do not enter areas that have been recently treated.
- Keep pesticides off your skin. Wear personal protective equipment, long sleeves, and long pants.
- Use respiratory protection.
- Do not bring food into treated areas.
- Wash hands before eating, drinking and smoking.
- Do not use water in drainage ditches for drinking, bathing, swimming or fishing.

For more information about protecting yourself at work, see:

[http://bit.ly/AntiPesticidesAtWork.](http://bit.ly/AntiPesticidesAtWork)

## If you work with pesticides, know your rights:

The Worker Protection Standard (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 staying safe at work, see:

<http://bit.ly/AntiPesticidesAtWork>.



If you do not work directly with pesticides, you can still be exposed if you work in treated areas or buildings. So...

- 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.
- Request action from your employer to correct any 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:

<http://bit.ly/OSHARights>.





# Protect Your Community

Pesticides in the environment end up in our bodies.

- **Avoid using pesticides.**

They contaminate our air, soil and water.

- **Support organic whenever possible.**

Organic farming reduces our exposure to pesticides by not contaminating our environment.

# Support Healthy Policies

We need public policies that prevent pesticide pollution in the first place and create a healthy food system for all. Everyone should have a right to a healthy environment and to food that has not been sprayed with pesticides.

- **Learn more about pesticide pollution.**
- **Register and turn out to vote.**
- **Let your representatives know what you think.**
- **Support groups working to prevent pesticide pollution.**

For more resources to influence policy, visit our resources page:  
[www.prhe.ucsf.edu/prhe/pmbrochurelinks.html](http://www.prhe.ucsf.edu/prhe/pmbrochurelinks.html)



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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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