LAWN PESTICIDES
An Unacceptable Risk

Lured by powerful advertising and eye-catching store displays, Americans spend seven hundred million dollars each year to purchase almost seventy million pounds of lawn pesticides. Notably absent from the colorful advertising and displays are warnings about the possible risks to our health, even from casual exposure to these powerful chemical poisons. Some of the most common lawn products contain chemicals that have been associated with several types of cancer, neurological and developmental problems, endocrine disruption, asthma, reproductive harm and birth defects. The environmental impacts also raise grave concerns, including the contamination of our drinking water supplies and the deaths of millions of wild birds and other wildlife from accidental ingestion or contamination of their habitats.

Government regulations concerning the marketing of these products do little to protect the consumer. Although product labels are required by law to disclose the acute health effects of exposure to a pesticide product (i.e. respiratory effects and eye and skin irritation), they do not warn of more serious chronic or long-term health effects. Nor do they warn individuals who are particularly vulnerable to chemical exposures, such as children, pregnant women and people with asthma, allergies and chemical sensitivities. An EPA registration number listed on a product does not mean that the product is safe, even when used as directed.

The good news is that you can have a beautiful healthy lawn without using pesticides and synthetic fertilizers! Pesticides actually destroy the beneficial organisms in the soil that nature has provided to keep your lawn free from insects, weeds and diseases. When you feed your soil with the appropriate nutrients, it will provide, in turn, the optimal growing conditions for your lawn. According to a recent survey by the National Gardening Association, an estimated 8.1 million households nationwide will use all natural or organic methods for their lawns and landscapes this year. Join the growing number of families that are enjoying their safe lawns and protecting their environment!

“Every day of every week we are continuing in this country to expose children to chemicals whose toxicity is simply not known. As a pediatrician, I urge parents to think carefully about the choices they make, especially about pesticides.”

Philip J. Landrigan, M.D.
Director of the Center for Children’s Health and the Environment, Mount Sinai School of Medicine

Pesticides and Children

Children are uniquely vulnerable to toxic exposures because of their small, rapidly developing bodies and typical behavior which includes playing on lawns and floors and putting unwashed hands in their mouths. In addition to the exposure on lawns, parks and playing fields, studies show that lawn pesticides can easily find their way into homes through open screens and the soles of shoes where they accumulate in carpeting and dust. Pesticides that are designed to breakdown by sunlight, water and soil microbial activity can remain active inside homes for months. Whether you have children, are expecting a child or hoping to have children in the future, it would be prudent to eliminate the unnecessary use of pesticides for lawn maintenance. Children should also be taught to stay off lawns that display pesticide application flags.

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