

Pesticides



1. If you can do only one thing to make your home safer for your family, avoid using pesticides. According to the EPA, 95% of the pesticides used on lawns are classified as possible or probable carcinogens. Pesticide use has also been tied to brain tumors and fatal non-Hodgkins Lymphoma.¹ Studies have shown that children raised in homes where pesticides are used regularly are six times more likely to develop childhood cancer than children who are not exposed.¹ Despite what pesticide companies will tell you, pesticides are poisons and can harm organisms other than those targeted, including your children. By their very nature, pesticides are not safe; and it is actually illegal for a company to tell you they're safe.

Resources:

"Pesticides and Health" - Natural Resources Defense Council - www.nrdc.org/health/pesticides/default.asp

"Ten Reasons Not to Use Pesticides" - *Journal of Pesticide Reform*, Winter 2001, Volume 21 Number 4 - <http://www.pesticide.org/TenReasons.pdf>

2. Take off your shoes (or wipe them on a mat) when you enter the house to avoid tracking pollutants and pesticides in. Even if you don't use pesticides on your lawn, other people do. Traces of their residues can end up on the bottom of your shoes (along with gasoline from the gas station and a lot of other things) and then rub off on your floors as you walk around your house.



3. Get the healthiest lawn by caring for it naturally. Use the following tips for strong, green grass.

- **Mow high.** Tall grass shades out weeds. Set your mower to 2-3 inches.
- **Water deeply and infrequently.** Water in early to mid-afternoon, about $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 inch every week (including rainfall).
- **Leave lawn clippings on the lawn.** Recycling grass clippings saves money, reduces waste, and it equals one application of fertilizer a year without unhealthy chemicals and their side effects.
- **Aerate as needed.** Aeration corrects soil compaction, strengthens grass root systems, enhances heat and drought stress tolerance and improves soil air and water uptake.

Resources:

"Taking Care of Your Lawn Without Using Pesticides" - *Journal of Pesticide Reform*, Winter 2003, Volume 23, Number 4 - <http://www.pesticide.org/lawns.pdf>

Organic Lawn Care Tips - <http://www.organiclawncaretips.com/>



4. Keep your home clean and bug-free. The easiest way to kick the pesticide habit indoors is by preventing the bugs and rodents from coming in the first place. The following tips will help you keep a bug and rodent-free home.

- **Don't provide bugs or rodents with food or water.**
Clean spills immediately.
- **Remove clutter** (where pests set up homes).
- **Seal food in air-tight containers.**
- **Mend torn screens and seal any cracks on the exterior of your house.** Make sure bugs and rodents don't have a way to get into your home.



Resources:

“Ten Steps to Pest Control” – Safer Pest Control Project -
<http://www.spcpweb.org/factsheets/TenStepsColor.pdf>

Additional Resources:

www.checnet.org/healthhouse- The Children's Health Environmental Coalition hosts the online “healthhouse” with information on just about every children's environmental health topic you can think of. Type “pesticides” into the search box to learn about the hazards of pesticides and safer alternatives. Likewise, type in any other topic of interest to learn about other children's environmental health issues.

www.beyondpesticides.org - Beyond Pesticides is the ultimate resource on information about pesticides. They have information on pesticide ingredients, least toxic pesticides, non-toxic pest management, how to talk to service providers, and how to find a non-toxic service provider in your community. They also have information on how to deal with pesticide emergencies, EPA and state agency listings, specific chemical toxicity information, and how to find an attorney and testing lab.

www.spcpweb.org - Safer Pest Control Project with information on residential, neighborhood, school and childcare usage. Great resources for talking to neighbors, schools and even park boards about using Integrated Pest Management.

www.pesticide.org - Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides works to protect people and the environment by advancing healthy solutions to pest problems. NCAP is dedicated to educating about pesticide hazards and alternatives, working with concerned citizens to challenge unnecessary spray programs, participating in developing public policy, and more.

¹ Diegelman, Nathan. Poison in the Grass: The Hazards and Consequences of Lawn Pesticides. The S.T.A.T.E Foundation. 1998. www.chem-tox.com/pesticides/pesticidereport.htm