

# How to Safely Beat the Bugs

[Summer's right around the corner...](#)

[And so are the bugs!](#)

As spring begins to turn into the hot and humid summer, many insects come out of hibernation and begin to pester us once again. Every year many people take it upon themselves to halt the invasion of invertebrates into our gardens, houses, and lives with potentially toxic chemicals. Your Poison Control Center recommends learning how to safeguard your families from these toxins.

## 10 Steps To Help Prevent Pesticide Poisonings

- 1) **Prevent Pests from entering.** The most effective way to reduce or eliminate pests is to prevent their entry into the house. Some measures that can help around the house are: removing sources of food and water such as leaky pipes and destroying pest shelters and breeding sites such as litter or plant debris.
- 2) **Store pesticides out of children's reach.** There are many chemicals in a household that can be very dangerous when ingested. Try to keep these dangerous chemicals in locked cabinets away from children.
- 3) **Read the label before using pesticides.** Household chemicals, pet products, and pesticides can be dangerous or ineffective if not used properly. Make sure to read all the directions and follow them as closely as possible to prevent any mishaps. Also make sure you're not using an outside pesticide indoors or vice versa.
- 4) **Keep children and pets away.** Before applying any chemical, whether a household chemical or pesticide, remove children, toys and pets from the area and make sure they are at a safe enough distance away from the chemical. Also wait until the chemical is dry or as long as the label recommends.
- 5) **Close the container properly.** Many chemicals can evaporate into the air. Improperly closed containers stored in a small confined area can produce harmful gases.
- 6) **Never transfer pesticides to other containers.** Children tend to associate food and drink with containers and can ingest large amounts of these chemicals without realizing what they are. It is best to leave chemicals in the original container since they usually have safety mechanisms to prevent accidental ingestions.
- 7) **When applying repellents read all directions.** It is important not to apply repellents on open wounds, cuts, or irritated skin. Do not apply to eyes, mouth, or hands and make sure to cover exposed skin or clothing but not skin under clothing. Some repellents wear off after a specific period of time so make sure to read the label.
- 8) **Wash hands before and after use.** It is easy to contaminate food with pesticides if you don't remember to wash your hands so make it a habit to wash your hands before and after handling any chemical.
- 9) **Label areas being treated.** If a room of a house is being fumigated make sure to put up signs so other members of the family don't walk into a cloud of fumes.
- 10) **Learn about the pest you're dealing with.** All pests need certain things to survive whether they are an insect in nature or not. If you eliminate these necessary resources many pests will die off on their own. It is not always necessary to rely on a chemical when Mother Nature can help.

# Symptoms of Pesticide Poisoning

**Organophosphates** – increased salivation, tearing, urination, defecation, sweating, vomiting and gastric upset. In severe poisonings there can be blurred vision, pinpoint pupils, muscle twitching, chest discomfort, seizures, unconsciousness

**Pyrethroids** – incoordination, tremors, salivation, vomiting, diarrhea, irritability to sound and touch

**Pyrethrum and pyrethins** – skin irritation and asthma like symptoms

**Boric Acid and Borates** – beefy red skin rash “broiled lobster appearance” and shortness of breath

**DEET** – major poisonings can occur during hot humid conditions when it is applied to skin and left on for a prolonged period such as overnight. This can cause skin to become red and tender followed by blistering erosion which could be quite painful. Application of DEET should be limited to clothing and only in low concentrations.

**Herbicides** – skin irritation, irritation to eyes and respiratory tract.

**Fumigants** – Headache, dizziness, nausea, and vomiting. Severe poisonings can produce stomach pain, loss of coordination, blue skin color, limb pain, enlarged pupils, shaking, stupor, seizures, coma and death.

**Rodenticides** –

**Anticoagulant types** – bleeding, nose bleeds, bleeding gums, black tarry stools, blood in urine, blue/black or greenish/brown patches under the skin.

**Zinc phosphide** – diarrhea, stomach pains, nausea, vomiting, chest tightness, excitement, coldness, unconsciousness, and death.

**Strychnine** – violent convulsions resulting in respiratory depression

## Tips to reduce/ eliminate pesticide residues in food

1. Wash with large amounts of cold or warm tap water, with a brush when appropriate, **DO NOT USE SOAP**
  2. Throw away outer leaves of leafy vegetables such as lettuce or cabbage
  3. Peel produce such as apples, pears, potatoes, and carrots
  4. Trim fat from meat, fat and skin from poultry and fish.
- Residues of some pesticides concentrate in animal fat.

## Here are some products you may not think are pesticides

Chlorine bleach	Disinfectants
Other antimicrobial products	Rat Poisons
Moth Balls	Flea and Tick Shampoos
Swimming pool chemicals	Weed killers
Baits	Repellents

## Statistics of Pesticide Poisoning

National data based on number of cases:  
2007(aapcc.org) # Exposures.

Herbicides.....	
Chlorophenoxy	2,456.....
Glyphosate	4,593.....
Insecticides.....	
Borate/Boric Acid	4,367.....
Organophosphate	3,974.....
Pyrethroids	21,721.....
Other	9,412.....
Repellents.....	
DEET	7,179.....
Rodenticides.....	
Superwarfarin	11,926.....

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a HERO too!!!  
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**Team Toxin**

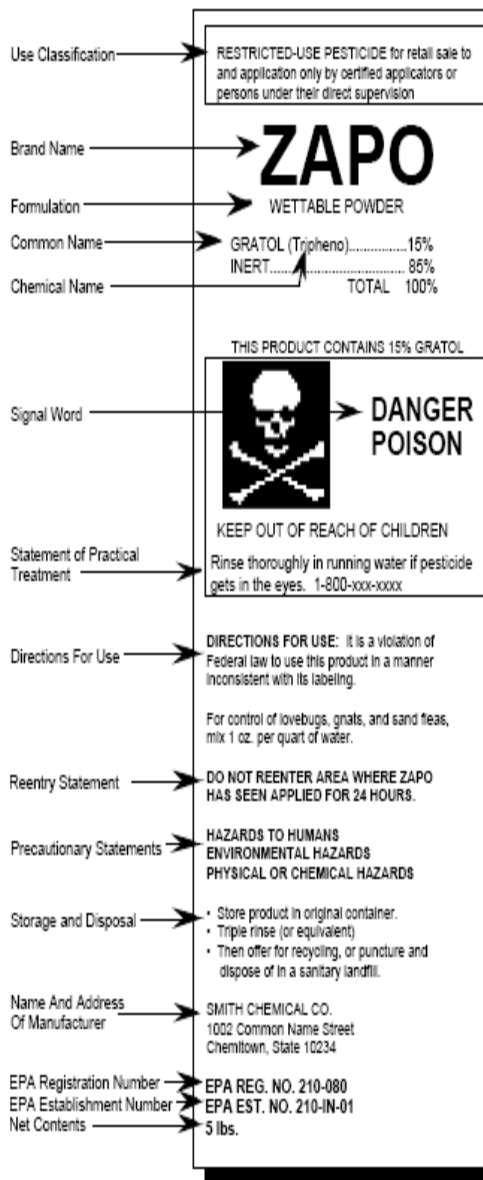


FIGURE 2. INFORMATION ON PESTICIDE LABELS.

Source: Inspector Training Manual. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

