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PESTICIDES

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Kill People

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COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY, CORVALLIS

PESTICIDES are chemicals used to kill pests. All pesticides are poisonous, for their purpose is to kill insects (insecticides), fungi (fungicides), weeds (herbicides), or rodents (rodenticides).

Improperly used pesticides can and do cause illness or even death to humans. In every case of human death from pesticides, the cause has been accidental misuse of a chemical poison.

It is important that anyone who uses a pesticide understand its uses and properties. Some are more toxic than others. Some, in concentrated form, will kill a human if only a few drops are spilled on the skin. Diluted or less toxic chemicals are still health hazards. Swallowing or inhaling pesticides result in more serious effects than does skin contact.

Every year almost 150 human deaths are attributed to pesticides in the United States. Of this number nearly half are children under 5 years of age. It is YOUR responsibility as a user of pesticides to protect young people from tragic accidents.

To be safe and keep your family safe—observe all of the following precautions.

- **Read the label** each time before you buy pesticides and again each time before you use them. Follow the instructions to the letter and use common sense to bridge the gap between what is written on the label and the actual chemical application.
- **Use the proper pesticide**, in the correct amount, at the right time, for the job to be done. Keep children away from mixing or spraying areas.
- **Store pesticides carefully**, away from food or feed in a locked cabinet or shed. Keep chemicals in their original containers; never in containers normally used for food or drink. Return unused portions of pesticides to safe storage promptly.
- **Dispose of empty pesticide containers** in such a way that they will not constitute a hazard to children, pets, or other animal life. Crush, break, and bury empty metal or glass containers whenever possible. Burn empty paper or fiber containers, being careful to avoid inhaling fumes. Bury empty herbicide containers. Burning often intensifies the toxic properties of these chemicals.

In case a pesticide is spilled on you, **remove clothes immediately and wash affected skin** with lots and lots of water. Get to a physician. If a pesticide is swallowed, use the antidote called for on the label and get a physician.



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