

Pesticides in the Home

Pesticide Control Program
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What are Pesticides?

Pesticides are substances intended to prevent, destroy, control, disinfect, repel or mitigate a pest. As you can see from this definition, a pesticide does more than kill pests. Examples of pesticides are insecticides, herbicides, algaecides, mildewcides, repellents and growth regulators. Used wisely, pesticides offer many benefits. However, some degree of risk is always posed by their use particularly when applied, stored or disposed of improperly.

Preventing Pest Infestations

Pesticides should be the last line of defense against household pests. Prevention is preferable to trying to cure any pest infestation with pesticides.

All living things need food, water, and shelter. Manage your home in ways that cut off supplies of these essentials to potential pests. Practice good sanitation to prevent pest access to food and water. Keep all foodstuffs in rodent and insect proof containers. Fix leaky plumbing. Do not let water accumulate anywhere in your home. Remove or eliminate potential shelter for pests. Caulk cracks around windows and doors. Seal openings where pipes and wires enter the foundation and siding. Install door sweeps at the base of all exterior entry doors. Repair gaps and tears in window and door screens. For small infestations, the use of mechanical controls may be sufficient to control pests. These include flyswatters, mouse traps, stick traps and handpicking.

If Pesticides Become Necessary

In spite of your best efforts to keep them away, pests sometimes become established in the home. In that event, use of the appropriate pesticide, in addition to prevention and mechanical control strategies, may become necessary.

First, identify the pest species you are trying to control. Check the label carefully to be sure the pesticide will control your particular pest. Follow the label's application directions precisely. The information on the label can help avoid unnecessary risks to people and the environment. It is your responsibility under the law to follow pesticide label directions. Buy only as much chemical as is needed to treat the desired area.

Limit Your Exposure to Pesticides

At minimum, wear waterproof gloves when mixing or applying the pesticide. If you must mix or dilute the pesticide, do so only in a well-ventilated area. Mix only the amount you need as prescribed on the label. If a spill occurs, clean it up properly. Wash thoroughly after using a pesticide. Launder the clothes you use during the application separately from the family wash.

Store Pesticides Securely

All pesticides should be stored out of reach of children, preferably in a locked cabinet. Poisoning often occurs because young children gain access to improperly stored materials. The tendency for adults to store household pesticides for their convenient access creates the potential for poisoning accidents with young children. Keep the phone number of the Poison Control Center near your telephone.

Pesticide Disposal

- Never pour leftover pesticides down the sink or into the toilet.
- If you have leftover pesticide you will no longer use, give it to a friend or relative who will be able to use it. Make sure the label is intact and completely legible.
- Participate in your community hazardous waste collection program.
- Dispose of pesticides according to label instructions or contact your state pesticide agency for advice on proper disposal.

Please contact the following if you need more information:

NJDEP Pesticide Control Program

General information: 609-530-4070

To report a pesticide misuse: 609-984-6568

Website: www.njpcp.org

National Pesticide Telecommunications Network

For questions on possible health effects: 1-800-858-7378

New Jersey Poison Information System

For emergency situations involving pesticide exposure or poisoning:

1-800-222-1222