

Using Pesticides Safely

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Are pesticides hazardous? That's up to you!

Pesticides can harm humans, animals, birds, fish, insects, and plants if used carelessly. They also can pollute the air, water and soil. You can reduce these hazards if you use pesticides properly.

Before buying any pesticide, make sure you've identified the pest correctly and that you're choosing the right pesticide for that pest.

Reduce your exposure by wearing proper clothing.

Pesticides can cause skin rashes and irritate eyes, throat and lungs. **Never spray wearing shorts and sandals.** At a minimum, wear:

- Long pants
- Long-sleeved shirt
- Rubber gloves
- Waterproof boots

Read the label before you buy the pesticide, and just before you use it, to see whether you need to wear a respirator, goggles or other protection. Don't wear soft contact lenses when spraying pesticides; they may absorb the pesticide.



Pesticides can cause skin rashes and irritate eyes, throat, and lungs. Never spray wearing shorts and sandals.

Photo: Oregon State University



When spraying pesticides, at a minimum you should wear long pants, a long-sleeved shirt, rubber gloves, and waterproof boots.

Photo: Oregon State University

Stop! Read the label!

The most important thing you can do before using a pesticide is read the label. It tells you how to use the pesticide, what protective clothing you need, and what to do if there's an accident. The label on the container is the law. It's illegal to use a pesticide in a way that doesn't follow its label recommendations.

Protect yourself and others

- Mix only the amount you need.
- Mix outdoors in a well-ventilated area.
- Never apply pesticides on a windy day.
- Keep children and pets out of the area when mixing or spraying pesticides.
- When working with pesticides, wash your hands before eating, drinking, smoking, or using the toilet.

Store pesticides safely

- Store pesticides out of reach of children and pets, in a locked place if possible.
- Store pesticides away from food, medicine, and feed products.
- Store pesticides in their original container.



Stop and read the label! The most important thing you can do before using a pesticide is read the label.

Photo: Oregon State University

Dispose of pesticides and containers safely

- Don't put unused pesticides directly in the garbage or pour them down the drain. Contact the [Household Hazardous Waste Program](https://www.oregon.gov/deq/hazards-and-cleanup/hw/pages/default.aspx) (<https://www.oregon.gov/deq/hazards-and-cleanup/hw/pages/default.aspx>) at the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality to find out what to do with them.
- **Liquid pesticides:** When you use all of the pesticide in a container, fill the bottle one third full with water, replace the cap tightly, and shake vigorously. Pour the water into your sprayer, allowing the container to drain for 30 seconds. Repeat at least three times, or until the container is clean. Keep empty containers until your community has a pesticide recycling day, or dispose of them in an approved landfill.
- **Pesticide powders and granules:** Follow label directions for disposal of containers.
- Don't use empty pesticide containers for other purposes.
- Don't burn pesticide containers in the fireplace, woodstove, or burn barrel. Don't put them in trash compactors.



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Photo: Oregon State University

For additional information on pesticides and pesticide-related topics contact the [National Pesticide Information Center](http://npic.orst.edu/) (<http://npic.orst.edu/>) at Oregon State University.

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