

# Hazards of Pesticide Use in Homes



Best practices for healthy homes

## What's wrong with using pesticides in the home?

Although adult residents are also at risk, infants and small children are more likely to suffer health effects from exposure to chemical pesticides because they:

- Spend time on the floor where pesticide residues tend to concentrate and linger.
- Pick up toys and other objects off the floor and put objects and fingers into their mouths.
- Can get into small spaces where they can touch cracks, crevices and holes where pesticides may have been applied.
- Absorb more environmental contaminants into their bodies than adults.
- Are still developing and some pesticides can interfere with a child's developing brain.

Many people hire pest control services to routinely apply pesticides for controlling pests, regardless of the actual need. The overuse of pesticides is a concern because:



- Sprayed and fogged chemicals become airborne and settle on surfaces in the home.
- People in the home can touch these surfaces and unknowingly expose themselves to pesticide residues.

## What are the health impacts of pesticides?

Exposure to pesticides at an early age can disrupt and permanently change the structure and function of organs and body systems.

When applied irresponsibly, some pesticides have been linked to both short-term and long-term health problems.

Short-term exposure to pesticides may cause temporary symptoms such as headaches, dizziness, muscle twitching, weakness, tingling sensations, and nausea.

Long-term health problems include cancer such as leukemia, birth defects, endocrine disruption, asthma, neurological disorders, and immune system deficiencies.

It is well established that children repeatedly exposed to low levels of pesticides may suffer from health problems that do not show up for many years.



## How can homeowners safely control pests?

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recommends Integrated Pest Management (IPM) to reduce pesticide risk and exposure to your family. IPM is a safer and cheaper approach to control pests in your home.

To learn about how to practice IPM in your home, please consult the [New Jersey Department of Health's IPM manual](#) that was developed for homeowners.