

# PESTICIDES

## What are Pesticides?

Pesticides are poisonous chemicals that are used to kill unwanted insects, plants, and rodents (pests) such as cockroaches, rats, mice, weeds and mold.

Most pesticides can be purchased in hardware stores or supermarkets. Do not assume that because you can buy them that they are safe for you and your family. Because pesticides are made to kill, they contain chemicals that can be very dangerous.

**If someone has accidentally swallowed any chemical, call the Poison Control Center at 800-222-1222.**

## How Do Pesticides Hurt People?

Contact with the skin or eyes can cause burning, irritation, or rash. Breathing the chemicals can cause serious breathing problems, and trigger asthma attacks. Swallowing pesticides can make you sick. Long-term effects include cancer, learning disabilities, birth defects and brain damage.

## But How Do I Get Rid of The Pests Without Chemicals?

Research has shown that regular use of pesticides is not effective against many pests. There are ways to protect your home from pests. Ask the Environmental Health Office for information on "Integrated Pest Management."

If you garden, there are alternative ways to fertilize and protect your lawn from weeds and bugs than using chemicals. Check out a book on organic gardening from your local library.



## Safe Use of Pesticides

If you believe that you have no alternative except pesticides, make sure that you follow these guidelines:

- Do not use the chemicals around children, pets, and toys.
- Follow the directions and warnings on the label of the container.
- Store the chemicals in their original containers.
- Never mix chemicals with one another.
- Wear protective clothing, like gloves and long sleeves.
- Keep them away from heat and flames.
- Wash your hands after using any chemical or pesticide.



If you have questions about specific chemicals, please call the Environmental Health Office at (617) 534-5966. You can also call the Massachusetts Pesticide Bureau at (617) 727-3020.



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John Auerbach, Executive Director  
Thomas M. Menino, Mayor

**Please call the Environmental Hazards  
Program for more information  
617-534-5966**