

PESTICIDE SOUND BITES KIT

Prepared for NISE (Network of Individuals for a Safe Environment)

By Judie Squires 2005

The spraying of pesticides is a dangerous precedent that creates significant short-term and long-term risks to our human health and environment.

Do you want to be spraying a pesticide, a suspected cancer-causing agent, into the indefinite future without knowing the long-term consequences on the environment and human health?

Pesticides can kill off fish and other natural predators to mosquitoes, making mosquito control difficult if not impossible.

Pesticides are toxic substances deliberately added to our environment. They are used because they are toxic and intended to kill and harm living things.

Repeated spraying can create pesticide-resistant strains of insects while destroying ecosystems in the environment.

Spraying pesticides is a Band-Aid solution to a long-term problem.

The use of pesticides is linked to cancer in humans. Unfortunately, we find out when it is too late to do anything about it!

Many people experience flu-like symptoms or dizziness, burning of throat, asthma, and other, more severe reactions, when exposed to pesticides.

Pesticides have serious consequences, especially in regards to half-life, runoff into water supply, synergy with other chemicals and cumulative effects in our lives.

Using pesticides can't be a calculated risk if we simply don't know all the long-term risks.

“Government approved” does not mean “government tested” or “safe”. The PMRA (pest management regulatory agency) only review the studies that are provided by the manufacturer.

It is illegal to advertise a pesticide as being “safe” – this bill was passed by health Canada.

The public at large knows as much about pesticides today as they did tobacco decades ago.

If these pesticides are so "safe," why are officials telling us to wash off toys left outside, garden chairs etc. Our government wants us to take precautions, yet they won't step up to take serious responsibility for costly side effects to the environment and human health.

Some Newfoundland regulations:

Cannot spray in the rain nor if rain is anticipated in the next 2 hours.

Cannot spray when wind speeds favor drift and not over 15km/hr.

Cannot spray some pesticide near water bodies or wells.

Cannot spray if the temperature is above 25 degrees Celsius

Cannot spray if humidity is above 50%

Should wear extensive protective equipment when handling pesticides.

Should provide adequate notice to adjacent homeowners to take appropriate

Must not enter the sprayed area for a minimum of 48 hours.

Pesticides are cancer risks just as cigarettes are. I have a right to sit in a non-smoking restaurant, but I don't have a choice on the poisons used around my neighborhood and children?
THAT IS A VIOLATION OF MY RIGHTS

What are we to do if we are sickened by a pesticide? Will public health officials be able to put us in touch with specialists in this field? Even top-notch doctors may have limited toxicology experience and are unprepared to assist patients who are poisoned. Residents and physicians should be aware that any new "symptom," even an odd one, which appears after spraying should be investigated, as the effects of pesticide poisoning can vary in type and intensity.

Children absorb greater concentrations of pesticides (poisons) per pound of body weight through inhalation, ingestion and contact with the skin.

Children are more likely to play on treated grounds. Unwashed hands often find their way to the mouth or to unwrapped snacks.

Children may not read, understand or pay attention to warning signs.

During the rapid growth period of childhood, cells divide very quickly, making it more likely that a cellular mutation will be reproduced, thus initiating cancer.

Small doses of neurotoxins can drastically impair the learning process in children.

Pesticides are found everywhere in the world, contaminating soil, air groundwater, surface water, rain, snow, fog, and even the Arctic ice pack. Pesticide residues contaminate birds, fish, wildlife, domestic animals, livestock, and human beings, including newborn babies.

There is abundant evidence of the risk toxic pesticides pose to human health. The most vulnerable populations are children, the developing fetus, the elderly, the ill and immunocompromised, and those with asthma, allergies, and other medical conditions. Most worrisome from a public health perspective are chronic health effects such as cancer, Infertility, miscarriage, birth defects, and effects on the brain and nervous system.

More than 70 municipalities in Canada are reducing and banning the cosmetic use of lawn and garden pesticides. It is estimated that eleven million Canadians are protected from exposure to lawn and garden pesticides. Why won't our government protect us?

The Canadian Cancer Society promotes a ban on the use of pesticides on lawns and gardens.

The Lung Association advises against the use of cosmetic pesticides on lawns and gardens.

Dr. Minnie Wasmeier, the medical officer of health in western Newfoundland, says the cosmetic use of pesticides for lawns and gardens should be banned. Wasmeier says it's her job to protect people's health.

Dr. Catherine Donovan, the Medical Officer of Health for the Eastern Region states that, “the use of pesticides for domestic, cosmetic purposes does not provide any substantial benefit other than aesthetics, which could be achieved by other, safer means. Therefore their use for this purpose is contrary to the precautionary principle of public health, as such I believe they should be banned for domestic, cosmetic use.” (*Official position statement - May 14, 2004*).

The Learning Disabilities Association of Canada, the Registered Nurses Association of Canada and the Ontario Public Health Association have called for the bans as well

The Ontario College of Family Physicians (OCFP) released a comprehensive review of research on the effects of pesticides on human health. Released April 23, 2004, the review shows consistent links to serious illnesses such as cancer, reproductive problems and neurological diseases, among others. The study also shows that children are particularly vulnerable to pesticides.

Halifax has a complete ban on lawn and garden pesticides. Prior to the ban, business or homeowners were required to place a bright yellow “skull and cross bones” poison sign on their lawns, 24 hours before a spray and four days after a spray. Children are well served by this BOLD approach to identifying chemical sprayed lawns; children recognize bright yellow as BEWARE and “skull and cross bones” as POISON. Prior to the ban, pesticides could NOT be sprayed within 2 meters of any property line, or 5 meters of a bus stop, mailbox or a post office. Pesticides could NOT be used within 50 meters of schools, daycares, hospitals, parks, playgrounds or a senior’s complex, university, church or hospital or those individuals found to be sensitive.