



**Southwest Center**  
FOR AGRICULTURAL HEALTH, INJURY PREVENTION, AND EDUCATION

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# **PESTICIDE SAFETY**

*with youth & adolescents*

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Have you ever stored a pesticide or chemical in a soda or water bottle? Far too often children are poisoned by pesticides when they drink from a bottle or container they mistook for food or drink. According to the EPA, “50% of the 2 million poisoning incidents each year involve children younger than six years old, and 90 percent of these incidents occur in the home.” <sup>1</sup>

Pesticide poisoning can cause serious health effects in children since their brain and nervous systems are still in early stages of development. The American Academy of Pediatrics reports that “high-dose pesticide exposure may result in immediate, devastating, even lethal consequences.” <sup>2</sup>

## SIGNS OF PESTICIDE EXPOSURE

The signs of pesticide poisoning may look like the flu. If your child shows any of the following signs after coming in contact with a pesticide, call the **Poison Control Centers** national hotline phone number, 1(800)222-1222, right away. <sup>3</sup>

- Headaches
- Dizziness/Weakness
- Muscle twitching
- Difficulty breathing

- Skin rashes
- Eye burning
- Change in overall level of alertness

## **ROUTES OF EXPOSURE**

Children and adolescents can be exposed to pesticides by directly touching them, touching something with pesticide residue on it, breathing it in, accidentally consuming it, receiving a hug or kiss from a loved one that has been handling pesticides, and from clothing or bedding that was washed with pesticide contaminated clothing.

## **STAYING SAFE**

- Follow the label guidelines.
  - Immediately wash your hands after applying pesticides.
  - Securely store containers out of reach and away from children.
  - Don't let children or adolescents play in an area that has just been treated with pesticides.
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***A farm or ranch can be a wonderful place for children and adolescents to learn, live, work, and play. Make sure that it continues to be a safe environment for them. Teach children that “pesticides are poisonous” and are not to be touched. Remember, temporary storage of a pesticide in a soda bottle might be convenient for you, but it could mean life or death for your child. <sup>4</sup>***

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## **CONTAINER & STORAGE TIPS**

- Tightly seal the container after every use.
- Re-close the pesticide container if ever interrupted during the application.
- Make sure the container is out of children's reach and in a locked cabinet, isolated room, or separate building.
- Keep pesticides in the original container with the attached label.

- Control access to the storage area and post “Pesticide Storage” signs to warn others.
- Never put pesticides in containers that could be mistaken for food or drinks. <sup>5,6</sup>

## FIRST AID GUIDELINES AFTER EXPOSURE

1. Call 911 if the person is unconscious, having trouble breathing or having convulsions.
2. Check the label for directions on first aid for that product.
3. Call the Poison Control Center at 1 (800) 222-1222 for help with first aid information.
4. The National Pesticide Information Center 1 (800) 858-7378 also can provide information about pesticide products and their toxicity.
5. EPA's publication, Recognition and Management of Pesticide Poisoning provides information about symptoms caused by poisoning with specific pesticides and treatment information.<sup>7</sup>

[Click for More Pesticide Safety Resources](#)

[Click for Free Pesticide Safety Posters](#)

## THE RESEARCH REPORT

Learn about past and current research projects at the SW Ag Center with these 5-minute research reports. Episode 1 with Michael Merten, PhD is available now on our social media pages. This episode highlights current research on preventing pesticide exposure in Latino adolescents through Promotora-based interventions. Click here to watch.



1. <https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-12/documents/pest-impact-hsstaff.pdf>
2. <https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/130/6/e1757/30399/Pesticide-Exposure-in-Children>
3. <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/all-around/Pages/Protecting-Children-from-Pesticides-Information-for-Parents.aspx>
4. <https://www.epa.gov/safepestcontrol/reduce-your-childs-chances-pesticide-poisoning>
5. <https://www.epa.gov/safepestcontrol/storing-pesticides-safely>
6. <https://agsafety.osu.edu/newsletter/ag-safety-stat/injury-prevention/safe-handling-pesticidesfarm#:~:text=%2D%20Keep%20pesticides%20and%20related%20materials,products%20that%20can%20become%20contaminated>
7. <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/all-around/Pages/Protecting-Children-from-Pesticides-Information-for-Parents.aspx>
8. <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-incidents/first-aid-case-pesticide-exposure>

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