



News Release

Methodist Hospital
I-65 at 21st Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46206-1367

Telephone: (317) 962-2335
Contact: James Mowry

For Release: Immediate

June 1, 2009

PESTICIDE USE AND SUMMER SAFETY

Warm weather heralds the arrival of insects and the use of products to control them. Pesticides are used in our homes, workplaces and communities. “While pesticides are helpful, they must be used *correctly* to enjoy the benefits while limiting the dangers of their use”, says **Dr. James Mowry**, Director of the **Indiana Poison Center**.

Poisoning from pesticides can occur through contact with the skin or eyes, by inhalation, or by ingestion. Poisonings from these chemicals may be immediate or long term from repeated exposures. While there are many different types of pesticides, symptoms of exposure to commonly used pesticides may include skin, eye and lung irritation, headache, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, salivation, muscle weakness, tremors and/or seizures.

Safety tips for using pesticides:

Remember that pesticides come in many different forms, some of which may surprise you. Insect repellent sprays and lotions and citronella candles are also sources of pesticides, although usually at lower concentrations than commercial pesticide products designed to be sprayed directly on insects. These products also should be treated carefully and kept out of the reach of children.

- Read the label carefully and follow the directions for mixing and use *exactly as stated on the label*. Never guess at amounts or use a stronger concentration than recommended.

- Always use protective clothing (leather and canvas clothes are difficult to clean, so shouldn't be worn). Wear gloves, long sleeves and long pants and goggles or a face shield. Remember to remove contact lenses, since they can absorb pesticides and trap them in your eyes.
- Check your equipment with water first for leaking hoses, connections, or dripping nozzles.
- When spraying outdoors, make sure all pets and people are out of that area and keep them away for the time recommended in the directions.
- When applying, check for wind movement. Apply only on days with no wind or a light breeze. Never spray upwind or on hot days to reduce the risk of vaporization.
- When spraying indoors, close all windows and turn off all ventilation, including air conditioning. Cover eating utensils, food, pet dishes, etc to protect them from contamination and remove pets and people from the area. After spraying, keep the area closed for the amount of time specified on the label and then ventilate the area until the chemical has dried and the area is odor free. Running the air conditioner is not ventilation, as it simply recirculates the same air – you will need to open doors and windows and use electric fans to get fresh air into the area.
- Once the project is completed, clean your equipment immediately. Don't remove your protective clothing until after cleaning is finished. Wash your skin with soap and water. Remember to wash your protective clothing separate from other clothing to prevent cross-contamination. If you use the washing machine to clean clothes, clean the machine well afterwards, *before* using the machine to do other laundry.

- Store pesticides in a locked cabinet in the original container with the original label intact.

Never leave mixtures in open jars. Even a small amount of residue in a container can become a toxic dose for a young, curious child.

To learn more about poison prevention and to receive a free magnet and phone stickers call the Indiana Poison Center at **1-800-222-1222**, or visit the Center's website at www.clarian.org/poisoncontrol. For a poisoning emergency, call the Poison Center immediately at **1-800-222-1222** where experts are standing by twenty-four hours a day to help you.

The Indiana Poison Center is an independent, non-profit, agency providing coverage and services for the entire state of Indiana. It serves as both an emergency telephone service and an information resource center, with services accessible to the general public and health care professionals 24 hours a day, 365 days per year. The IPC is the designated Regional Poison Information Center for Indiana and is certified by the American Association of Poison Control Centers. It is a collaborative effort of the Indiana State Department of Health, Clarian Health, the Federal Health Resources Services Administration and health care providers throughout the state.