

PESTICIDES: Minimizing Exposure

NPIC fact sheets are designed to answer questions that are commonly asked by the general public about pesticides that are regulated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA). This document is intended to be educational in nature and helpful to consumers for making decisions about pesticide use.

Many people have pests in or around their homes. Whether it's a bug, weed, rodent or bacteria, pest control may involve using a **pesticide product**. First, consider an **Integrated Pest Management (IPM)** approach to pest control. If you decide to use a pesticide product, you can minimize your risk by minimizing your exposure to it. Below, you'll find some optional tips for doing just that!

Anytime you use a pesticide, be sure to **read and follow label instructions**. The label will include important information for protecting yourself and it will tell you how to apply the product in the way that it will work best. Wear protective clothing and equipment, as required by the product label. Always keep children and pets away while you're applying the product. After you're done, wash your hands, face and clothing. If someone else is applying the pesticide to your home, ask them what precautions you should take, such as leaving the area for a period of time. You might also ask the applicator to show you exactly where the pesticide will be applied.

When a **liquid** will be applied **indoors**:

Before application:

- Remove food, toys, pet food and water dishes, and any bedding in the application area.
- Close doors to rooms, closets, and cupboards that are not infested.
- Determine the location of air ducts and openings so they can be avoided, and turn off central heating or air units.

During application:

- Apply at low pressure to avoid making small particles that can linger in the air.
- Avoid treating food preparation areas, the inside of pantries, or pet feeding or sleeping areas, unless the label states otherwise.
- Avoid interruptions or distractions in order to keep track of areas that have been treated and to avoid accidents.

After application:

- Speed up drying time by opening windows and turning on fans.
- Keep kids and pets out of the treated area until the product has dried.



When a **liquid** will be applied to the **yard or garden**:

Before application:

- Remove what items you can from the application area, including toys, pet food and water dishes, etc.
- Make note of important items that need to be covered or avoided, such as wellheads, play structures, pet living or sleeping areas, vegetable gardens, and sensitive plants.
- If the application will be near the house, close doors and windows and turn off AC units.

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- Find out if your **state** requires you to place signs notifying neighbors, and place any required signs so they are very visible around the edge of treated area.

During application:

- Don't use the highest-pressure setting, unless directed by the label. This can create small particles that can linger in the air.
- Don't apply when it's too windy or the product may drift away from the application site.
- If someone else is applying the product, avoid the area during application, especially downwind from the application.



After application:

- Be aware that damp or shaded areas may not dry as quickly as sunny locations.
- Keep people and pets off of the treated area for the amount of time specified on the label, or until the area is dry, whichever is longer.
- If you have to walk on the treated area, remove shoes before going inside to minimize tracked-in residue on floors.

When granules will be applied to the yard or garden:

Before application:

- Cover, avoid or remove any items that could capture granules, such as potted plants, pathways, or bird-baths.

During application:

- Avoid getting granules stuck in pant legs, shoe laces, etc.
- If using a broadcast spreader, be careful not to fling the product into nontarget areas such as gardens, pools, playgrounds, etc.

After application:

- Keep pets and children out of the area until the granules are watered in and the surface is dry. Check the label for application directions for your specific product.
- Use caution when mowing, edging or trimming if there are still granules visible. This may chop them up and fling them into the air.

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When a **dust** will be applied to **indoor cracks and crevices**:

Before application:

- Determine the location of air ducts and openings so they can be avoided. Turn off any heating or cooling systems during the application to avoid disturbing the dust.
- Remove items such as food, toys, pet food and water dishes, and any bedding or clothing that will be in or near the application area.
- If drilling holes is necessary for the application, plan and perform the drilling before starting the application.

During application:

- Avoid putting your face close to application site.
- Avoid throwing or putting excess dust into the air.
- Avoid wind, drafts or ventilation that could carry the product to unintended areas.

After application:

- Plug any drill holes according to label directions.
- If any dust gets airborne, keep people and pets away until it settles. Clean up the area as needed, according to the label directions.
- If there is visible excess dust outside of cracks and crevices, clean up the dust according to the label directions.

