

PESTICIDES: An Introduction for Poison Control Centers

The **National Pesticide Information Center (NPIC)** is a service that provides science-based information about pesticides and pesticide-related topics.

NPIC operates a hotline from 8:00 am to 12:00 pm Pacific Time, Monday – Friday.

The phone number is **800-858-7378**. This hotline is staffed by trained Pesticide Specialists.

- If a caller calls outside of these hours, NPIC will return their message within one business day.
- Email us at npic@ace.orst.edu and someone will reply to your email within one business day.
- Find information about pesticide topics on NPIC's website: npic.orst.edu

Who does NPIC serve?

Most of NPIC's callers are the general public, but NPIC also answers questions from doctors, veterinarians, pest control companies, and pesticide manufacturers.

Foreign Language Capability: NPIC can assist people in over 240 different **languages** through an over-the-phone language service.

Poison Control Center operators can refer *non-emergency* pesticide questions to NPIC.

What kind of questions *can* NPIC answer?

- **Risks to people:** short- and long-term health effects, risks for children and pregnant women, non-emergency information for health care providers
- **Risks to pets:** short- and long-term health effects
- **Environmental effects:** how pesticides move in the environment, effects on wildlife, effects on bees and other pollinators
- **Pesticide regulation:** laws and regulation of pesticides, food safety, farmworker safety
- **Documenting incidents:** when a caller wants to report something such as a workplace exposure or a bad reaction to a pesticide by a person or animal
- **Proper storage and disposal:** how to store, transport, or dispose of a pesticide

What are questions NPIC *cannot* answer?

- NPIC specialists are not medically trained and cannot provide medical advice (with the exception of some veterinary medical information).
- NPIC cannot provide immediate reporting to CDC or other health agencies.
- NPIC has no regulatory authority and cannot conduct investigations.
- NPIC does not make pesticide product recommendations.



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Do you know what a pesticide is?

You may know them as:

- herbicides, including Weed & Feed
- insecticides, including bug repellents
- pet flea collars and most flea drops
- fungicides and mold control
- antimicrobials and disinfectants, including sanitizers used in hospitals
- rodenticides
- wood preservatives and **more**.

NPIC has health information about all of these types of products.

NPIC maintains a **database** of all pesticide products registered with the EPA.

How do you read a pesticide label?

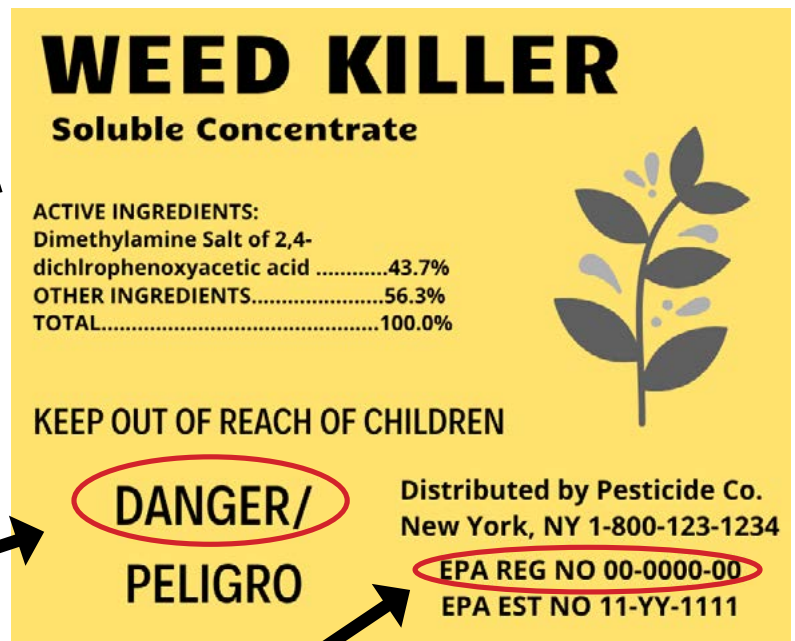
The **label** on a pesticide package lists the **active ingredient(s)**, **signal word**, directions for use, first aid instructions, hazards to humans, pets and wildlife, environmental hazards, and more.

Active ingredients are the chemicals in pesticides that kill, control, or repel pests.

Other ingredients, also called **inert ingredients**, are not listed on the label. They are confidential business information. They may be more or less toxic than the active ingredients. They may change how an active ingredient acts in the body or the environment. Pesticide companies sometimes disclose these other ingredients to medical professionals to treat poisoning cases.

Pesticide Signal Words:

The **signal word** is printed on the label and shows how acutely toxic the product is. It describes the toxicity of the whole product: both active ingredients and other ingredients. Signal words include caution, warning, or danger.



The **EPA Registration Number** is a unique product number. Use this number to pull up the pesticide label in the **NPRO** (NPIC Product Research Online) database.

DANGER ⇒ Highly toxic by at least one route of exposure. May be corrosive to skin or cause irreversible eye damage.



If the product is highly toxic when swallowed, inhaled, or absorbed through skin, the label must include the word **"POISON"** and skull and crossbones.

WARNING ⇒ Moderately toxic if eaten, inhaled, or absorbed through the skin. Causes eye irritation lasting 8-21 days; causes severe skin irritation.

CAUTION ⇒ Slightly toxic if eaten, inhaled, or absorbed through the skin. Causes minor eye or skin irritation.