
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.

National Pesticide Information Center

Pets and Pesticide Use

Pet owners often use pesticides in or around their homes to control a variety of pests. Owners also may apply pesticide products directly to pets to control parasites. While many pesticide products are beneficial, poor planning or improper use of a product can harm pets.

Indoor use: Animals are exposed to pesticides when they breathe in the product, absorb it through the skin, or ingest the product. Therefore, remove pets from any areas that you plan to treat with pesticides. Also remove pet toys and chew bones from the area. Keep them away from treated areas until the pesticide is completely dry and the area is well ventilated. Always read pesticide labels for specific instructions as to how long to keep the animals out of the house or treated area.

Cover fish tanks to prevent liquid vapors from entering the tank. If you use foggers, always remove animals from the house and turn off fish tank pumps.

Place baits in areas where pets cannot reach them.

Outdoor applications: Do not allow pets in sprayed areas until the pesticide has dried completely. Granular products may have specific instructions for watering the granules in and keeping the pets off the treated area for 24 hours or longer. Read the label to determine re-entry time. Because animals can be exposed from eating a product or absorbing it through their skin, take care that animals do not eat or lick a product and that they do not enter an area until it is completely dry.

Body applications: Use care when applying pesticides directly to pets. Follow the label carefully, and be sure to use the correct amount of product for the animal being treated. Most topical formulations are applied according to the animal's weight. Use sprays as the label instructs.

Be aware that over-treating animals can poison them. Products labeled for use on "dogs only" should never be used on cats or other animals. Products designed for adult cats or dogs should never be used on kittens or puppies unless the label states that the product may be used on younger animals.

Wear protective clothing as stated on the label to minimize your exposure to the pesticide. Keep children away from the animals for the specified waiting period on the label.

Signs of Poisoning: Sometimes even careful use of a product can cause harm to a sensitive, ill, or injured animal. If the animal seems listless, has increased salivation or drooling, stumbles when it walks, or has muscle tremors or convulsions, contact a veterinarian or the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center immediately. The Animal Poison Control Center can be contacted at 1-800-548-2423. A consultation fee of \$60* per case may apply which can be charged to a credit card.

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*Consultation Fee is subject to change without notice.

NPIC is sponsored cooperatively by Oregon State University and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Data presented through NPIC documents are based on selected authoritative and peer-reviewed literature. The information in this profile does not in any way replace or supersede the restrictions, precautions, directions, or other information on the pesticide label/ing or other regulatory requirements.
