

Lawn Pesticide Fact Sheet

- Of 30 commonly used lawn pesticides, 19 have studies linking them with cancer, 13 are linked with **birth defects**, 21 with **reproductive effects**, 15 with **neurotoxicity** or **abnormal brain development**.¹
- **Children are particularly susceptible** because of their rapid growth and decreased ability to detoxify toxins.^{2,3}
- **Studies link some lawn pesticides to hyperactivity, developmental delays, behavioral disorder, and motor dysfunction.**^{4,5,6}
- A Study in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute found that home and garden use of pesticides **can increase the risk of childhood leukemia by almost seven times.**⁷
- **Lawn pesticides can be tracked inside of schools** where they can persist for long periods of time contaminating air, dust, surfaces, and carpets and exposing children to these toxic chemicals even if they are not in contact with the grass.⁸
- **There are safe, effective, affordable alternatives** to using toxic lawn pesticides. A number of towns in Connecticut have successfully switched to pesticide-free organic lawn care.^{9,10}
- **IPM is allowed for 2 years on athletic fields in order to restore the soil** (which becomes degraded through pesticide use) and make the transition to pesticide-free organic care.¹¹
- There is **provision for pesticide use if there is a condition that threatens the health and safety of the children.** For example, an underground wasp nest or an infestation of ticks.¹¹
- There are **significant gaps in the safety testing** of toxic lawn pesticides.¹²
 - **Lawn pesticides are not tested for long term toxicity** unless they are also used on food crops
 - Lawn pesticides are **not tested in the combinations and formulations in which they are actually used.** Yet, these combinations and formulations can be more toxic than the pure active ingredient.
 - There is **no testing of the toxicity of the breakdown products** of these chemicals or their persistence in the environment
- **Lawn pesticides can contaminate well water.** 11% of residential wells tested in a Connecticut town showed the presence of one or more lawn pesticides.¹³
- With so many unknowns and with plausible evidence of harm to children, **it makes no sense for our children to be involuntarily exposed to the unnecessary use of these toxic chemicals especially when there are safe, effective, affordable alternatives.**

References

- 1 <http://www.beyondpesticides.org/lawn/factsheets/30health.pdf>
- 2 National Research Council, National Academy of Sciences. 1993. Pesticides in the Diets of Infants and Children, National Academy Press, Washington, DC: 184-185.
- 3 US EPA, Office of the Administrator, Environmental Health Threats to Children, EPA 175-F-96-001, September 1996. See also: <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/food/pest.htm>.
- 4 National Research Council. 2000. Scientific frontiers in developmental toxicology and risk assessment. Washington, DC: National Academy Press. Physicians for Social Responsibility, The National Environmental Trust, and The Learning Disabilities Association of America. 2000. Polluting our future: Chemical pollution in the U.S. that affects child development and learning. http://www.net.org/health/tri_report.pdf (accessed 6/2/05).
- 6 Cox C. 2004. Journal Of Pesticide Reform. Vol. 24 (4) citing: Garry, V.F. et al. 2002. "Birth defects, season of conception, and sex of children born to pesticide applicators living in the Red River Valley of Minnesota." Environ. Health Persp. 110 (Suppl. 3):441-449.
- 7 Lowengart, R. et al. 1987. "Childhood Leukemia and Parent's Occupational and Home Exposures," Journal of the National Cancer Institute 79:39.
- 8 Nishioka, M., et al. 1996. Environmental Science Technology, 30:3313-3320; Nishioka, M., et al. 2001. Environmental Health Perspectives, 109(11).
- 9 See the Northeast Organic Farming Association Connecticut Chapter's information on organic land care. <http://www.ctnofa.org/OrganicLandCare/OLC.htm>
- 10 Managing Healthy Sports Fields: A Guide to Using Organic Materials for Low-Maintenance and Chemical-Free Playing Fields by Paul D. Sachs, January 2004
- 11 See Public Act 05-252, An Act Concerning Pesticides At Schools And Day Care Facilities.
- 12 EPA registration requires only that the pure chemical compound of the pesticide be tested
- 13 A survey of Private Drinking Water Wells For Lawn and Tree Care Pesticides in a Connecticut Town, Environment and Human Health, Inc.1999.