

## Pesticide/Disinfectant Related Injuries in the Home

Americans use more than a billion pounds of pesticides, including disinfectants, each year according to the EPA. Although these chemicals serve many useful purposes, they can cause injuries because of their toxic properties.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) tracks illnesses and injuries caused by exposure to pesticides. From 2006 through 2014, MDHHS received reports of over 1,900 people who became ill after an exposure to a pesticide in or around their home. More than half (58%) of these people were involved in applying the pesticide themselves, and many of the rest (31%) were exposed

because someone else was applying the product incorrectly. More than 10% were children aged five or younger. The most common preventable cause of injury or illness was mixing incompatible

products (for example, mixing bleach with another cleaning product or urine). Another common cause was not following label instructions, such as spraying outside in the wind. The third leading cause was spills or splashes.

Wearing protective equipment can prevent these accidents from making you sick.

Sometimes people get sick from pesticides despite doing everything they can to use them safely. However, many times it is because they did not read and follow the label instructions.

A pesticide is anything used to prevent, destroy, repel, or reduce pests and the damage they cause. Pests are living things that are not wanted because they cause damage to crops, humans, or other animals. Pests can include insects, weeds, fungi, rodents, and germs. Pesticides include bug sprays, weed killers, rat pellets, and disinfectants.



## **Pesticide/Disinfectant Illnesses and Injuries are Preventable!**

In order to keep yourself and your family safe, please remember to:

- **Always read the label!**
  - Labels contain important safety information and you are required by law to apply the pesticide according to the label instructions. Do not rely on your memory for information!
- **Never mix different pesticides or different cleaning agents.**
  - This can result in a dangerous chemical reaction or make the pesticide useless.
- **Never apply pesticides in windy or rainy conditions.**
  - This can result in exposing yourself or others *plus* the product may not work as well.
- **Always wear the recommended protective equipment.**
  - If it wasn't important it wouldn't be recommended.
- **Always store pesticides/disinfectants in a secure location and in the original container.**
  - Small children love to explore. Keep dangerous chemicals locked up!
- **Always remove children, pets, and food before applying a pesticide/disinfectant.**
  - Children and pets can be extremely sensitive to pesticides.
- **Always wash your hands immediately after using a pesticide/disinfectant.**
  - Eating or smoking with pesticides on your hands can make you sick.
- **Never use a pesticide/disinfectant for a purpose not on the label.**
  - If the pest or plant you want to get rid of is not listed on the label there is probably a better product out there.
- **Never over-apply pesticides/disinfectants.**
  - This is more likely to harm someone than make the pesticide work better.