



# COLORADO ENVIRONMENTAL PESTICIDE EDUCATION PROGRAM

Pesticide Fact Sheet #109  
CEPEP 5/00  
Updated 6/06

## FIRST AID FOR PESTICIDE POISONING

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This fact sheet will cover first aid for breathing in dust or vapors, pesticides in eyes, pesticides spilled on the skin or clothing, and swallowed pesticides.

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## First Aid for Pesticide Poisoning

When pesticide poisoning is suspected, prompt action helps the victim survive. First aid is extremely important; action taken during the first 5 minutes following exposure may determine whether the victim lives or dies. While first aid is administered, someone should arrange for medical assistance. Someone with suspected pesticide poisoning should **NEVER** be left alone nor sent for medical treatment unaccompanied. Be sure medical personnel are advised of possible pesticide contamination. Know what pesticides were used, including the EPA registration number found on the pesticide label (see Pesticide Fact Sheet [The Pesticide Label](#)).

### Breathing Dust or Vapors

- Get fresh air. Move away from the source, either upwind or out of a confined area
- Immediately move anyone overcome by dust or vapors
- Provide resuscitation, if needed, and decontamination
- Remove contaminated clothes
- Wash skin and hair with soap and water or drench with water
- Handle contaminated clothing properly
- Seek immediate medical treatment if feeling ill

### Pesticides in the Eyes

- Hold the eyelid(s) open and wash eye immediately with a gentle stream of clean running water. Tilt the head so pesticide does not run from one eye into the other
- Continue washing for 15 minutes or more
- If pain or discomfort continue or vision is affected, seek immediate medical treatment

### Pesticides Spilled on the Skin or Clothing

- Remove all contaminated clothing
- Wash all skin with soap and water or drench with water
- Handle contaminated clothing appropriately
- If illness occurs, seek medical treatment

### Pesticides Swallowed

- **Read the label.** Never induce vomiting unless it is specified on the label
  - If vomiting is specified on the label, induce vomiting with syrup of ipecac

- **Never** induce vomiting if the victim is unconscious or in convulsions
- **Never** induce vomiting if the pesticide is corrosive (evident by burns)
- **Never** induce vomiting if the pesticide contains petroleum products (emulsifiable concentrates or solutions)
- When vomiting is **not** called for,
  - Dilute the pesticide by drinking milk (1-2 cups for children under 5, up to a quart for others), **or**
  - Administer activated charcoal to absorb the pesticide. Mix it with water into a thick soup. Activated charcoal is found in aquarium filters and is available from drug stores
- Call 911 or the [Rocky Mountain Poison and Drug Center](http://www.rmddc.org) (1-800-222-1222)



**REMEMBER!**  
**Stop exposure!**  
**Resuscitate and decontaminate!**  
**Get medical treatment!**

### **References and Resources**

Buffington, E.J. and McDonald, S.K. 2001. *General Colorado Commercial Pesticide Application and Safety Training Guide*. Colorado State University and Colorado Department of Agriculture, Fort Collins, CO.

*Citizen's Guide to Pest Control and Pesticide Safety*, September 1995. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Prevention, Pesticides, and Toxic Substances. EPA 730-K-95-001, Washington, D.C.

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