



**Without even realizing it, you often practice pest control in your home. Many household products contain pesticides, including disinfectants, cleansers, mildew removers, and more. Pesticides have benefits, and they are part of everyday life. But like any other chemical, pesticides can harm water quality, if used improperly.**

**Pesticides are most effective when bought, used and disposed of properly. Most pesticides are toxic to a target pest, whether it be an insect, weed, rodent, plant disease or bacteria. But pesticides are also designed to be safe for people and the environment when used properly.**

**How can you buy, use, and dispose of pesticides to best protect your home, children, and pets? Here are some tips.**



Created for your local agency by the California Environmental Protection Agency  
**Department of Pesticide Regulation**  
Sacramento

Go online at [www.cdpr.ca.gov](http://www.cdpr.ca.gov) to learn more about pesticides and IPM

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For more information about **home2ocean** go online at [www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/h2o](http://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/h2o)



## Using Pesticides Safely

**Keep your home and garden green and our water clean.**



## Buying Pesticides

First, correctly identify the problem pest. (Check a garden reference book at your library or nursery.) Then seek the least-toxic, most pest-specific practices or pesticide treatment. Ask your nursery about pyrethrins, insecticidal soaps, diatomaceous earth, and horticultural oils, among other products. Use conventional pesticides only when other controls fail.

- Read the pesticide label to help get maximum benefits with minimum risk.
- Plan ahead. Buy just enough pesticide to do the job or to last the season.
- Consider ready-to-use products rather than concentrated solutions. This can reduce storage problems.
- Never transfer pesticides to soft drink bottles or food containers.
- Keep pesticides locked up and out of the reach of children and pets.

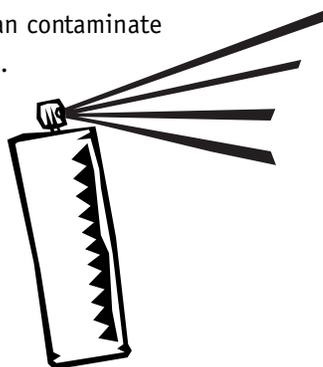


## Using Pesticides

Before using a pesticide, **read the entire label and carefully follow its directions.**

While pesticides are toxic to pests, they are safe for people and the environment if you take sensible precautions:

- Dilute and mix pesticides outside.
- Clean up spills on hard surfaces immediately. Use sawdust, kitty litter or paper to soak up liquids, then place material in plastic bags and dispose with trash. In yard or garden, dilute liquid spills with water.
- Don't spray on windy days.
- Open windows if pesticides are applied indoors.
- Keep children and pets clear from areas treated with a spray until the spray dries.
- Don't use pesticides when rain is forecast. Runoff from lawns and gardens can contaminate waterways.



## Safe Disposal of Pesticides

The job's not done until you clean up safely:

- **Never** dispose of any pesticide by flushing it down the drain or toilet.
- **Use it!** The best way to dispose of excess pesticide is to use it according to directions on the product label.
- Follow label directions to dispose of unused pesticides (unless local laws are stricter). Contact your county agricultural commissioner for advice — see county government phone listings.
- Otherwise, dispose of empty pesticide containers with your garbage. Wrap unused liquid or dry pesticides — in original containers — with several layers of newspaper, then tape or tie securely. Do **not** recycle pesticide containers. Best bet: your county's hazardous waste collection program.

