Play It Safe

Reduce Your Child’s Chances of Pesticide Poisoning
Pesticides: What are they?

A pesticide is any bait, liquid, powder, or spray used to kill a pest (ants, germs, cockroaches, flies, mice, rats, or termites).
You turn your head and your toddler is inserting a sandwich half into the DVD player. Mostly, we’re lucky; our momentary slipups as parents aren’t too harmful. However, some close calls can be scary—like catching your three-year-old holding a can of bug spray.

Most people aren’t aware that household pesticides, the products we use in and around our homes to kill ants, germs, cockroaches, flies, mice, rats, and termites, can harm a child’s health if stored or used improperly.

Each year thousands of children under the age of six are poisoned by common household pesticide products. Many parents still store pesticide products within the reach of children. One of the simplest ways of preventing pesticide poisoning is to store household products out of a child’s reach.

Accidents are bound to happen in life, but we can’t depend solely on good fortune to protect our kids from harm’s way. Play it safe. With some simple prevention steps, you can assure a safe and healthy home for your family despite life’s unpredictable moments.
How do children come in contact with pesticides?

Children can come into contact with pesticides stored or applied in their homes, yards, day-cares, schools, parks, or on pets. Children often touch things (that may contain a pesticide) and put their hands in their mouths. They also crawl and play on floors, grass, or in spaces that might contain pesticides. These activities may put them at higher risks for poisoning. Contact with pesticides may cause serious harm to a child’s health.
How do you know if your child has been poisoned?

The signs of pesticide poisoning may look like the flu. If your child shows any of the following signs after coming in contact with a pesticide, call your poison control center right away.

- Headaches,
- Dizziness,
- Muscle twitching,
- Weakness, and
- Tingling.
How can I make sure that my child is safe from poisoning?

Use these tips to help you poison-proof your home:

- Read the label first. Follow the directions as they are written on the label before using a product.
- Crawl around on your hands and knees to see if you've missed any potential dangers from your child's viewpoint.
- Install safety latches on cabinets.
- Use child-resistant packaging correctly by tightly sealing the container after every use.
- Re-close a pesticide package if ever interrupted during application (e.g., phone call, doorbell, etc.). Make sure the container is completely out of children's reach while you're absent.
How can I make sure that my child doesn't get poisoned?

**Home:**

- Keep pesticides in their original containers. Never put poisonous products in containers that could be mistaken for juice or food.
- Alert all caregivers about the potential dangers of pesticides and share these tips with them.
- Teach children that “pesticides are poisons” and not to be touched.
- Lock up all pesticides and harmful products in a cabinet, out of a child’s reach.

Post the Poison Control Centers’ national hotline phone number, **1-800-222-1222**, near every telephone in your home.