

Pesticides

Pes·ti·cide/ 'pestə ,sīd/

NOUN: A substance designed to kill pests. This term includes insecticides (kill insects), herbicides (kill plants), fungicides (kill fungi) and rodenticides (kill rodents).

- Health Canada Pest Management Regulatory Agency

The Canadian Cancer Society agrees that cosmetic use of pesticides in and around our homes has significant unintentional impacts on human health, animals, plant and the environment. Medical experts recommend that we reduce our dependence on the use of pesticides for the beautification of our lawns, gardens, greenways, school yards, parks and golf courses in order to have a truly beautiful, health and safe city for everyone.

Exposure

Did you know that if a pesticide is being applied to a lawn it can be detected 15 metres away? Anyone living in an urban area in Saskatchewan breathes air with measurable quantities of 15-19 herbicides in late spring. Pesticides are found in water; drinking water in six Saskatchewan communities was tested and was contaminated with an average of seven pesticides.

In 2004, the Ontario College of Family Physicians released its finding on pesticides and the adverse risks they pose to human health. Their review of current scientific data shows consistent links to serious illnesses such as cancer, reproductive problems and neurological diseases.

Exposure and Children

Children are more exposed and vulnerable to the effects of pesticides than adults. They are smaller, their skin is more permeable, and their livers do not excrete as efficiently. Their hand-to-mouth behaviour increases the chance of ingestion, and they often play on exposed surfaces such as lawns and floors. This puts them at higher risk for disease, such as non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, kidney cancer, leukemia and a variety of tumours. People with asthma are especially sensitive to pesticides and at risk of attacks when exposed to even small amounts.

“Epidemiologic studies suggest that children with asthma may breathe easier if they are exposed to fewer pesticides at home and at school. And parents and school administrators may breathe easier knowing that they are not harming the children's developing nervous systems.”

Dr. Ruth Etzel, MD, PhD, George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services

Don't Forget Fido

If you use pesticides in your yard, you may be placing your best friend in danger. Some pesticides are proven to cause liver and kidney damage, cancer, reproductive problems and skin irritation. Pets are more vulnerable to the ill effects because they are smaller, closer to the ground, and lick paws and fur and chew toys that may have been exposed to these toxic chemicals. In addition, parts of their bodies that have high chemical absorption rates, like their under arms and rear ends, are often directly exposed to pesticides.

Cosmetic Pesticide Policy Recommendations

There is no legislation or bylaws restricting cosmetic pesticide usage in Saskatchewan despite the fact that we have the highest household use of pesticides in gardens and lawns in Canada. Meanwhile, over 171 municipalities and 5 provinces have responded by enacting pesticide reduction bylaws and legislation to protect their public and the environment.

The Saskatchewan Environmental Society along with the Canadian Cancer Society and the Saskatchewan Lung Association created a policy paper suggesting 3 different policies for reducing cosmetic pesticide usage in Regina to protect human health and protect sustainability. A city-wide bylaw was suggested as the preferred policy option because it has proven to be a more effective method of reducing cosmetic pesticide use in urban areas, it is socially desirable, ecologically viable and the benefits of a city-wide bylaw outweigh the cost.

To read more about these policy options check out the link to the report: Protecting Public Health and the Environment: The Need for a Pesticide Reduction Bylaw in Urban Settings, A Policy Proposal for Regina. [Regina Pesticide Policy PDF](#)

What you can do

Visit our [Pesticide Fact Sheets](#) to learn more on how to manage pests in your lawn and garden without using pesticides. Click the link to learn more!

Saskatoon Pesticide Reduction Program

From 2005 to 2011, SES implemented a [Pesticide Reduction Program](#) in Saskatoon. We offer free support for residents looking to try natural lawn care. Whether you're concerned about the health of a child, a pet, yourself, or the environment we will support you throughout your pesticide-free growing season. Please contact us for more information regarding our program.