

PETS AND PESTICIDES

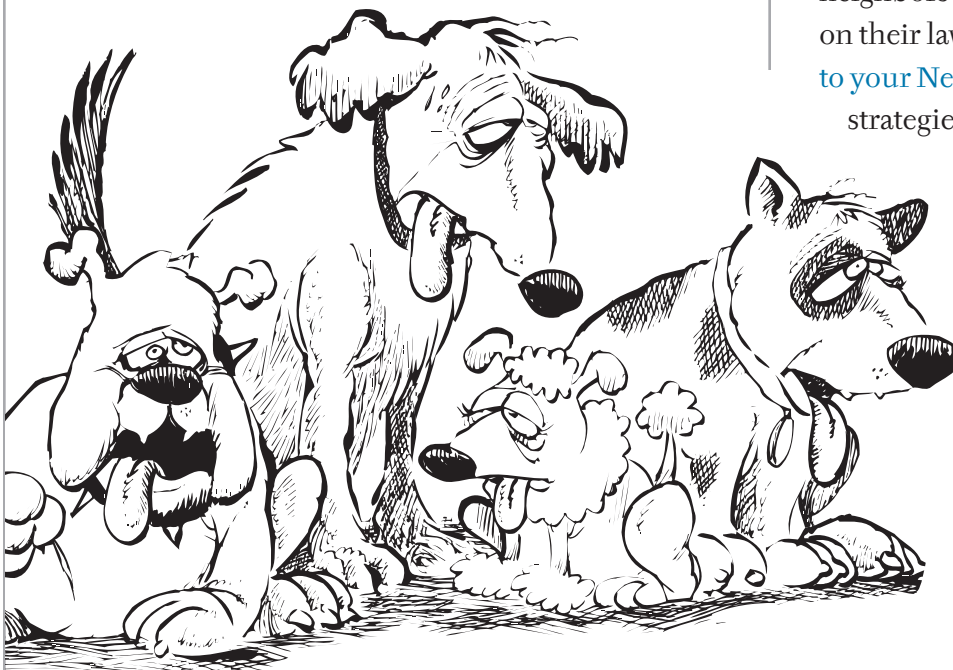
A FACTSHEET FROM SAFER PEST CONTROL PROJECT



Do you use pesticides to maintain your lawn and garden? You may not realize that the use of pesticides can make your pet sick. Pesticides, such as herbicides and insecticides, are poisons designed to kill living things. Pesticides can be as deadly to pets as they are to pests. Pesticides have been linked to reproductive problems, birth defects, cancers, and skin irritation in animals.

IN YOUR YARD

Animals can be exposed to pesticides (such as weed killers and grub control) when they breathe in the product, absorb it through their skin, or mistake it for food. Pets are exposed to higher levels of pesticides than adult humans because they are smaller, are in direct contact with the ground, and frequently clean themselves with their mouths and tongues. Remember -- pesticides don't just disappear once you have applied them; they may remain in the air, on the ground, and in the soil for months or years. You and your pets bring them into your home on your shoes, clothes, and bodies.



IN YOUR HOME

Many pesticides used to treat indoor pests such as cockroaches and ants can increase pet exposures to pesticides as residues of the chemicals remain in the air. In addition, studies have shown that lawn chemicals drift and are tracked indoors where they may remain in carpets and on surfaces for up to a year.¹

IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Pesticides used on the neighbors' yards can also affect your pet. Many sprays do not stay put, but drift to adjacent properties. Get to know your neighbors and ask if they use chemical treatments on their lawns. Use SPCP's fact sheet titled "[Talking to your Neighbors about Pesticides](#)" for effective strategies to get them to change their practices.

Take precautions, such as keeping your pet indoors, when neighbors are applying chemicals to their lawns.

In Illinois you have the right to request notification from lawn care companies prior to applications occurring on neighboring properties. Please refer to our fact sheet, "[Laws to Protect You From Outdoor Pesticides](#)".

¹Nishioka, M.G. et al. 1996. "Measuring lawn transport of lawn-applied herbicide acids from turf to home: Correlation of dislodgable 2,4-D turf residues with carpet dust and carpet surface residues." *Environmental Science and Technology* 30: 3313-3320.

PETS AND PESTICIDES (cont.)



IN YOUR PARKS

Pesticides are used in local parks, schoolyards, and roadways to control weeds like dandelions. Natural areas are often treated for thistle and other weeds that are considered invasive. Watch for signs indicating when areas have been treated. Avoid walking in these areas with your pet for at least 72 hours.

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR PET

- Never apply pesticides if pets are in the yard.
- Remove all feeding bowls, water dishes, and pet toys from any area before applying a pesticide.
- Avoid using pesticide in pellet form because it can look like food.
- Use natural lawn care techniques. For more information see SPCP's "[Lawns You Can Live With](#)" fact sheet.

According to the Animal Poison Control Center, "July and August are the most dangerous time of year for companion animals. . . The data found that over 48% of the cases involved animals being exposed to pesticides happens during the summer months."

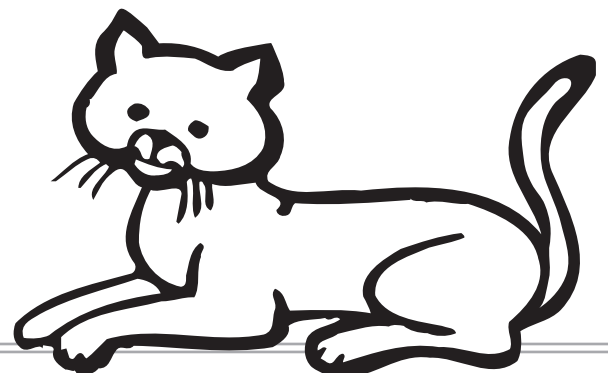
– ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center,
May 21, 2002

IF YOU SUSPECT THAT YOUR PET HAS BEEN POISONED BY PESTICIDES, SEEK VETERINARY ASSISTANCE IMMEDIATELY!

Although your vet may suspect pesticide poisoning, it is hard to diagnose and even more difficult to prove. Many of the inactive ingredients in pesticides are not listed on the label, and can often be more toxic than the active ingredients. Some doctors and veterinarians are unaware of the health effects of pesticides, and may misdiagnose poisoning as another illness.

Keep the animal warm and quiet. If possible:

- Identify the chemical(s) applied.
- Determine likely exposure, whether it is a diluted or concentrated product, and how much time has elapsed since application.
- Take the product with you to the vet.
- Save vomit for possible analysis.
- Obtain toxicity information from Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS), or contact the Animal Poison Control Center at 1-800-548-2423.



Safer Pest Control Project is dedicated to reducing the health risks and environmental impacts of pesticides and promoting safer alternatives in Illinois.

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