

Protecting Your Pet From Pesticides

- Switch to organic lawn care if you have not done so already. The basic principles of organic turf management are:

Feed the soil - add compost, compost tea and soil amendments

Feed the grass - leave grass clippings on the lawn to provide nitrogen

Re-seed annually - overseed to create dense, weed-free turf

Mow high - cut at 3-3 1/2" to shade roots, conserve moisture, keep out weeds

Water less, but longer - water deeply once weekly in the early morning

Control weeds - dig out dandelions, use vinegar product on hard surfaces

Control pests naturally - use compost/compost tea to feed "good" bugs

- Keep pets off lawns that display pesticide application warning signs. If neighbors spray their properties or use a chemical lawn service, try to keep your pets indoors during and for about a half hour afterward to avoid airborne drift. Bring food and water bowls inside.

- If your pet has been on a pesticide treated lawn, wash off their paws with a mild soap and water solution before they enter the house. This will help to avoid accidental ingestion and possible contamination of carpeting, upholstered furniture and household dust.



- Keep lawns mowed and rough areas free of tall grasses and weeds to limit the opportunities for ticks to come into contact with your pet. Recently developed botanical formulations for outdoor tick (and flea) control seem to be both effective and low risk. See website below for information.

- Fleas are a nuisance and it's best to keep your pet from getting them in the first place. If your pet spends time outdoors, groom them regularly with a flea comb, bathe them frequently, vacuum their indoor spaces daily and wash their bedding often to kill any larvae. If you have an indoor flea infestation, heat treatments are one of the most effective non-toxic solutions.

- Indoor pest control should be limited to bait stations, if possible. Baits should be placed in areas inaccessible to pets. If you decide to use a more aggressive form of pest control such as sprays or foggers, pets should be removed from the home for at least 24 hours and longer if possible. All of their bedding, toys and food dishes should be washed before using again. Try to avoid granular pesticides, as they are often mistaken for food by pets.

For more information, additional references and links to other resources, please visit www.grassrootsinfo.org



Pets & Pesticides

What You Need to Know



- Common lawn care pesticides contain chemicals that are known to pose a serious risk to your pet's health, including several types of cancer, respiratory and reproductive problems and endocrine disruption. Pesticide residues can remain on lawn surfaces (and leaves) for weeks or months, depending on rainfall and watering practices.
- Several peer-reviewed studies show that dogs exposed to 2,4-D, a common herbicide (weed killer) were 30% more likely to develop canine malignant lymphoma and had a significantly higher risk of developing bladder and testicular cancer. The risk increased with the number of applications. A significant exposure to any pesticide may result in shock or sudden death.
- Dogs and cats use their noses to explore their outdoor environment, inadvertently absorbing pesticides into their bodies through this mucous membrane pathway. Although both dogs and cats can absorb pesticides through licking their fur, cats are particularly vulnerable to this accidental ingestion due to their grooming habits.
- Secondary poisoning for both dogs and cats may occur if they hunt and eat mice, other small rodents or insects who have been intentionally poisoned with pesticides.
- Flea and tick control products, including powders, shampoos, sprays, topical creams and ointments, and collars, often contain insecticides which can be toxic to an animal's nervous system and can cause other serious health problems. Veterinarians are aware of these risks and should be consulted before purchasing any products.
- Direct contact with pesticides used for indoor pest control can also put your pets at risk. These include powders, granules and "foggers." Pesticide residues on carpets, furniture and in the air can remain inside your home long after an application.
- Humans, especially children, can increase their own exposure to pesticides because of their close contact with their beloved companion pets.

Information obtained from: Journal of the National Cancer Institute, Journal of the American Veterinary Assoc., American Journal of Epidemiology, Purdue University School of Veterinary Medicine and University of Massachusetts School of Public Health.