

# SPRING ALERT!

*Does your child know what this sign means?*



Warmer weather is finally here, and our kids are outdoors playing on lawns. While this is a healthy activity for children, parents need to be aware that many lawns are treated with potentially harmful chemical pesticides. **Please make your children aware of the meaning of the yellow pesticide application warning flags** and tell them to stay off lawns where they are displayed.

The unique behavior of children as well as their developing physiology make them more vulnerable to these chemicals than adults, and studies have shown that even small exposures to pesticides at critical periods of development may cause acute or long term health problems, including asthma, neurological and endocrine problems and certain cancers.

Many commonly used lawn pesticides can remain on the grass long after the warning signs have been removed. Pesticides can be inhaled, absorbed through the skin, or inadvertently ingested when children put unwashed hands in their mouths. They can also be tracked indoors on shoes, where they do not break down quickly, and can remain an exposure risk for months.

*“As a pediatrician I urge all parents to reduce pesticide use as much as possible, especially lawn services. Children’s health is more important than a few weeds.”*

**Philip J. Landrigan, M.D.**

*Director of the Global Public Health Program at Boston College*

To limit your family’s exposure, stop using pesticides on your own lawn and keep children away from treated areas in parks, playgrounds or on neighbor’s lawns. Even commonly used consumer “weed and feed” products contain harmful pesticides. If a neighbor is spraying their yard, close your windows and bring moveable items inside, especially children’s toys and animal food dishes. Many landscaping companies offer natural or organic lawn programs which are safer for kids, pets and our environment.

