



# PETS AND PESTICIDES

## A FACTSHEET FROM MIDWEST PESTICIDE ACTION CENTER

**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 and can be as deadly to pets as they are to pests. Pesticides have been linked to reproductive problems, birth defects, cancers, and skin irritations in animals.<sup>1</sup>**

### IN YOUR YARD

Animals can be exposed to pesticides (such as weed killers and grub control) at higher levels than humans while playing outside. They can breathe in the product, absorb it through their skin, or mistake it for food. Remember—pesticides don't just disappear once you have applied them; they remain in and on the air, ground, and soil for weeks, or months.

### IN YOUR HOME

Pets can be exposed to indoor pesticides used to treat pests like cockroaches and ants long after the application, because the residues of the chemicals can remain in the air, on the carpet, and throughout the house. In addition, lawn chemicals can drift and be tracked indoors where they remain in carpets and on surfaces for up to a year.<sup>1</sup>

### IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Pesticides used on the neighbors' yards can also affect your pet. They can drift onto your property due to wind and rain. Get to know your neighbors and ask if they use chemical treatments on their lawns. See MGG factsheets "Talking to your Neighbors about Pesticides," and "Laws to Protect You from Outdoor Pesticides," for more information.

**In 2013 ASPCA toxicologists received over 28,748 phone calls about pets being poisoned by pesticides - insecticides, rodenticides, and herbicides - and fertilizers.**

**— 2014 ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center**

### IN YOUR PARKS

Watch for signs indicating when areas have been treated. Avoid walking in these areas with your pet for at least 72 hours.

### ON YOUR PET

Flea and tick medications are another source of pesticide exposure. There have been many incidents of pets having seizures, rashes, and even dying as a result of some of the chemicals in flea and tick treatments. These pesticides can not only harm your pet but can rub off on furniture and family members through contact.



<sup>1</sup>Nishioka, M.G. et al. 2001. Distribution of 2,4-D in Air and on Surfaces inside Residences after "Lawn Applications: Comparing Exposure Estimates from Various Media for Young Children". Environmental Health Perspectives 109, 11: 1185-91.



# PETS AND PESTICIDES (cont.)

## HOW TO PROTECT YOUR PET

- Never apply pesticides when pets are on the lawn.
- Use natural lawn care techniques. For more information visit [MidwestGrowsGreen.org](http://MidwestGrowsGreen.org)
- 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 alternative techniques for controlling fleas and ticks (see sidebar).

## SUSPECT PESTICIDE POISONING? SEEK VETERINARY ASSISTANCE IMMEDIATELY!

Follow these steps to make sure your pet gets treated properly:

- 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, or Contact the Animal Poison Control Center at (888) 426-4435.



## FLEA AND TICK PESTICIDES: ADVICE AND OPTIONS

### ADVICE ON PRODUCTS CONTAINING PESTICIDES

#### Avoid the Most Toxic Products:

Amitraz  
Fenoxycarb  
Permethrin (especially around cats)  
Propoxur  
Tetrachlorvinphos (TCVP)

#### Choose the Safer Alternatives:

Lufenuron  
Nitenpyram  
Pyriproxyfen  
S-Methoprene  
Spinosad

### THE PESTICIDE FREE OPTION

**Flea Combing:** Use a flea comb regularly to reduce and monitor for fleas. Kill found fleas in soapy water.

**Bathing:** Give pets a bath regularly. No need to use shampoo with pesticides since any soap will kill fleas.

**Washing:** Wash pet bedding and surrounding area regularly.

**Vacuuming:** Vacuum carpets and furniture often especially around pet bedding areas.

**Maintaining outdoor areas:** Mow your lawn to 3" and trim bushes to limit habitat. Disperse beneficial nematodes (found at garden supply stores) throughout your yard- they kill fleas, ticks, as well as lawn pests such as grubs.

Source: Natural Resources Defense Council,  
[www.greenpaws.org/\\_docs/GP\\_pocketguide.pdf](http://www.greenpaws.org/_docs/GP_pocketguide.pdf)

**Midwest Grows Green accomplishes large scale behavior change by sharing pesticide and fertilizer information at critical places where lawns and landscapes influence our lives**

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