

WHAT IS A PESTICIDE?

Pesticides are substances intended to kill or otherwise control weeds, insects, fungi or pests. They can be over-the-counter products, or special chemicals not easily available to the public. Examples include herbicides that kill weeds or insecticides that kill bugs.

WHAT IS MEANT BY THE TERM ‘COSMETIC USE OF PESTICIDES’?

Also known as the ‘ornamental’ or ‘non-essential’ use of pesticides, this means pesticides which are being used to enhance the appearance of private gardens and lawns, as well as parks, recreational facilities and golf courses, by controlling unwanted weeds, pests, and plants or to prevent blemishes and other imperfections.

WHY GO PESTICIDE FREE?

- Increasing evidence links pesticide exposure to serious health and environmental problems.
- Young children and babies are at a greater risk from the effects of pesticides because of their small size, their rapid development and immature immune systems, as well as their behaviour including playing on lawns and floors and putting their hands in their mouth. Exposure to pesticides is linked to childhood cancers, kidney and liver damage, and birth defects.
- In adults, pesticides have been linked to Parkinson’s disease, reproductive problems, and cancers.
Pesticides don’t stop at the fence or garden gate and they pollute waterways and the air, landing in our yards, gardens and homes.
- Risks to pets include increased aggression and thyroid enlargement in cats and increased rates of cancer in dogs. Also vulnerable are many wildlife species, including fish, frogs, turtles, and of course the beneficial insects, earthworms, and pollinating bees.

REDUCE YOUR EXPOSURE

- Use healthy alternatives - there are numerous alternatives to using pesticides;
- Check labels on garden products and ask questions;
- Using non-toxic solutions such as herbicidal or insecticidal soap, borax, acetic acid (vinegar) or corn gluten;
- Adopting healthy lawn practices such as pulling weeds by hand, aerating, over-seeding, mowing high and watering infrequently; and
- Spread the Word and Speak Out. Let your local government and others in the community know that you support making your community pesticide-free. Email, fax or hand-write a letter to your local Mayor and Council and/or the local newspaper to voice your support for a pesticide-free community. See the Resources section for model legislation and more.

About Prevent Cancer Now: Prevent Cancer Now was launched in 2006 by 15 concerned and frustrated Canadians to build a Canada-wide movement to eliminate preventable causes of cancer. Rather than adding to efforts to find the elusive cure, Prevent Cancer Now focuses on cancer prevention - eradicating all known or suspected carcinogens from consumer products and industrial processes. Prevent Cancer Now strives to educate the public on actions that individuals, communities, businesses, and governments can take to reduce or eliminate cancer-causing exposures. This factsheet was adopted from the “Pesticide-free Cranbrook” campaign. For more information visit our website: www.preventcancer.ca