

# Know the Dangers of Pesticide Exposure

Editor's note: Our Tailgate Training Tip Sheets are [available in Spanish at www.gemplers.com](http://www.gemplers.com).

## KEY POINTS:

- Always wear personal protective equipment when handling pesticides.
- Read the emergency first aid section on the pesticide label.
- Know where to get emergency help in case of pesticide exposure.

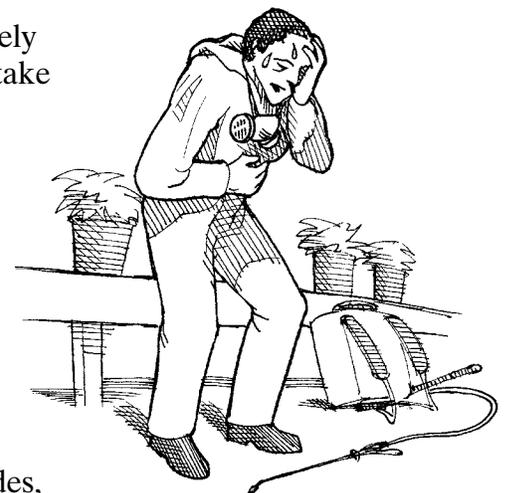
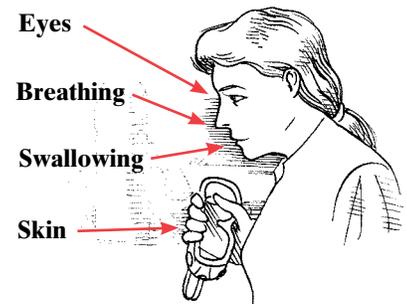
*Note to trainer: Follow this script or use it to help guide you through a 10- to 15-minute tailgate training session for your ag/hort workers. You may photocopy this sheet for your employees' personal use. However, it may not be published or sold.*

## Pesticides can harm you

- Pesticides are chemicals used to destroy pests on plants and crops. They can also harm you if you do not handle them carefully.
- It's important to always wear personal protective equipment such as [chemical-resistant gloves](#) or [coveralls](#) when working with pesticides.
- Pesticides can harm you immediately or over time if you:
  - get them on your skin
  - get them in your eyes
  - breathe (or inhale) them
  - swallow them
- Pesticides can enter your body even more easily through cuts and wounds.

## Symptoms of pesticide exposure

- The symptoms of pesticide exposure may vary, depending on the type of pesticide, the amount you are exposed to, the length of time you are exposed, and other factors.
- Sometimes, a person who is exposed to pesticides will immediately become ill. Other times, there may be no symptoms and it may take years for the effects of pesticide exposure to show up.
- Symptoms of pesticide poisoning may include:
  - skin rashes, burns or irritation
  - headaches, blurred vision or eye irritation
  - dizziness
  - excessive sweating
  - chest pains or trouble breathing
  - nausea or vomiting
  - stomach cramps or diarrhea
  - convulsions
- Immediately stop working and call for help if you inhale pesticides, or are splashed or sprayed with a pesticide.



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See our [full line of safety supplies](#), including respirators, eye and ear protection, coveralls, first aid and more.

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## First aid for pesticide exposure

- Be sure you've reviewed the entire pesticide label before you begin working with a pesticide.
  - In case of accidental exposure, the label will tell you how to give emergency first aid.
  - Here are some other tips:
    - If a pesticide gets on your skin, immediately remove contaminated clothing and personal protective equipment. Thoroughly wash your skin with soap and water for 15-20 minutes. Then seek medical help.
    - If a pesticide gets in your eyes, immediately rinse them with an [eye flush kit](#) or let a gentle stream of water flow across them. Hold your eyelids open and keep rinsing your eyes for 15 to 20 minutes. Then seek medical help.
    - If you inhale a pesticide, get to fresh air immediately. If you are having trouble breathing, call for help, then sit down. Seek medical help.
    - Get professional emergency medical help as soon as possible. Have the pesticide label with you when you call the emergency medical services or see a doctor.
- Note to trainer:** Tell trainees where to find the information on who to call.*
- Wear the proper protective gear if you have to rescue someone who may be unconscious after breathing in pesticides.



**Thoroughly wash your skin with soap and water if a pesticide gets on it.**

## A few more pesticide safety tips

1. Read the pesticide label to find out what personal protective equipment you must wear when handling the pesticide.
2. Carefully inspect your coveralls, gloves and [other protective gear](#) for tears, holes, leaks and other damage to keep pesticides away from your body.
3. Be sure to properly remove, store or dispose of pesticide-contaminated clothing.
4. [Wash your hands with soap and water](#) each time you take a break from working with pesticides.
5. Always let someone know where you are when you are working with pesticides.



## Are there any questions?

***Note to trainer:** Take time to answer trainees' questions. Then review the Pesticide Dangers Do's and Don'ts.*

### PESTICIDE DANGERS DO'S AND DON'TS

**DO:**

- Always use personal protective equipment when working with pesticides.
- Read the label before you handle pesticides.
- Immediately seek professional emergency medical help if you or a co-worker are exposed to pesticides.

**DON'T:**

- Touch the contaminated clothing or skin of a person who has been exposed to pesticides without wearing protective gloves.
- Wear damaged gloves or protective clothing.
- Hesitate to ask your supervisor for help if you don't understand the instructions on a pesticide label.

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