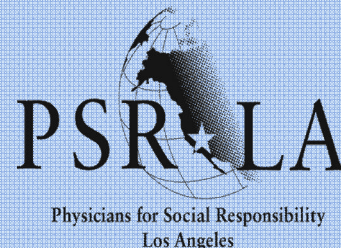


Pesticide Poisonings and Reporting Requirements— What Doctors Should Know



In California, urban use of pesticides in and around our homes, schools, workplaces and communities equals or exceeds all in-state agricultural use of these chemicals.

Points to Consider when diagnosing pesticide-related illness:

- Clinical presentation can resemble common medical conditions (flu-like illnesses, gastroenteritis, etc).
- Patients may display non-specific symptoms and physical signs.
- Exposure History is the most important information in making a diagnosis.
- For most pesticide illnesses, there are no diagnostic tests, nor specific therapy other than supportive care.

Additional Resources for Pesticide Reporting and Training:

Contact PSR-LA at **213-689-9170 x 108** to schedule a training on the health impacts of pesticides and how to report pesticide-related illnesses.

WHAT IS A PESTICIDE:

“Pesticide” is the general term for any substance designed to kill undesired insects, weeds, rodents, fungi, bacteria or other organisms. Insecticides kill insects, herbicides kill weeds, fungicides kill fungi and rodenticides kill rodents.

PATHWAYS OF EXPOSURE:

One of the most overlooked pesticide exposure pathways is the urban environment. Urban residents become exposed during spraying and fumigation of homes and apartment buildings. Communities also often spray pesticides in parks and on roadways to kill unwanted insects and weeds. Many schools and child care centers utilize chemicals to control their indoor and outdoor pest problems.

PESTICIDE POISONING INCIDENCE RATES:

- About 1000-2000 cases are reported annually in California
- Over ½ of the pesticide-related poisonings cases are due to non-agricultural use, including home use insecticides.
- Severe under-reporting remains an issue because of lack of training opportunities for health professionals and because pesticide-related illness is difficult to diagnose.

ACUTE PESTICIDE POISONING SYMPTOMS- *patients may present with:*

- Burning, itching, stinging of the nose, throat and skin
- Diarrhea
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Asthma attacks
- Rashes
- Blisters

SCREENING QUESTIONS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EXPOSURES

(Since some people may not realize their illness is pesticide-related, we recommend asking the following screening questions):

- Has your home or work been recently fumigated or sprayed with pesticides?
- Are there regular applications of pesticides occurring in your home or work?
- Are your symptoms better or worse when you are at home or at work?
- What kind of work do you do?
- Do you think your health problems are related to your home, work or other location?
- Are you now or have you previously been exposed to pesticides, solvents or other chemicals, dusts, fumes, radiation, or loud noise?

PHYSICIAN REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

- Physicians are required to report known or suspected pesticide-related illness to the local health officer within 24 hours (Health and Safety Code §105200).
- In Los Angeles County doctors can report pesticide-related illness to the Los Angeles Department of Health Services Morbidity Unit via the telephone at 213-240-7821 or by faxing a pesticide illness report to 213-482-5508.
- Pesticide illness reports can be downloaded at the California Department of Pesticide Regulation’s website: <http://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/whs/physician.htm>
- Failure to report a pesticide poisoning is a citable offense and subject to civil penalty (\$250).