

Subject: Re: Pesticides poison 6,000 Canadians per year

From: Corrie Kost <kost@triumf.ca>

Date: Thu, 21 Jun 2007 12:58:11 -0700

To: Monica Craver <mecraver@shaw.ca>

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Dear Monica,

Let us put things into perspective before we go on the "ban" wagon.

I refer everyone to http://www.toronto.ca/health/children/pdf/growingupsafely_manual_sec02.pdf

Note that not a single fatality has been reported in the Sun article (bolded in red) while page 1 of the above reference

had typically 9 deaths/year, 631 hospitalizations and 18,033 ER visits in Toronto alone! I specifically attach page 9 of the report which illustrates that simple home products are the culprit - not using weed killers on our lawn. To add focus on the real issue/dangers I refer the reader to the Canadian Health Network (attached as children-poisoned.pdf) article. Would council propose banning paints and certain plants? The vast majority of accidentally poisoned children were caused by careless storage of common household products (including pesticides - especially the stray type). Education, not bans, is what is needed.

Corrie Kost

Monica Craver wrote:

**Pesticides poison 6,000 Canadians per year
Half the victims are under six years old, according to a survey**

Kelly Patterson
CanWest News Service

Thursday, June 21, 2007

OTTAWA -- *More than 6,000 Canadians -- almost half of them children -- suffer acute pesticide poisoning every year, according to the first comprehensive national survey of the issue.*

"The numbers are shocking," says Gideon Forman, executive director of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment. "It is very worrisome that almost half of the victims were under six years old."

"This is a much bigger problem than anybody previously suspected," says David Boyd, author of the report, which was based on data from poison control centres across the country.

Boyd's report tracked only acute pesticide poisonings -- those resulting in immediate effects, such as blistering of the skin, respiratory distress, heart palpitations and vomiting.

Suspected chronic effects of pesticides, such as a higher risk of cancer, neurological

diseases such as Parkinson's, birth defects and organ damage, were not taken into account in the report, which was released Wednesday by the David Suzuki Foundation.

More than 2,800 children under the age of six suffer acute pesticide poisoning in Canada every year, comprising 46.5 per cent of all recorded cases, the report found.

Quebec had the highest number of reported pesticide poisonings overall, with 2,096, followed by Ontario with 1,629, and Alberta with 1,021. Provinces with large populations of farmers had the highest per-capita incidence: 33 per 100,000 for Saskatchewan and 30 per 100,000 for Alberta.

Ontario had a reported 13 cases per 100,000.

No fatalities were reported.

Boyd says the report's findings fall below the actual incidence of poisonings, noting there are no national standards for collecting the data.

The Maritime provinces, for example, don't report how many pesticide-poisonings involve children, and Manitoba provided only partial data.

The federal Pest Management Regulatory Agency says manufacturers and some poisoning victims have, in the past, come forward voluntarily every year to report acute exposures; these typically amount to only five to 20 cases a year.

But the agency, which sets the safety rules for pesticides, recently expanded this program, making incident reports mandatory for manufacturers, says agency spokesman Jean-Pierre Lachaine.

It has received 20 to 30 reports since that rule came into effect in April, said Lachaine. So far, all have been minor incidents, he said.

And the PMRA is setting up a website for members of the public and health-care professionals to report poisoning incidents electronically. These reports, along with agency analyses of the data, will be posted on the web once the program starts toward the end of this year, he adds.

"That's a step forward," says Dr. Robin Walker, former chief of neonatology at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario. "Canada has been lagging well behind the U.S. in this regard."

However, he adds the reporting of pesticide poisonings by health-care workers should be mandatory, not voluntary, so that cases don't fall between the cracks.

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growingupsafely_manual_sec02-page9.pdf

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children-poisoned.pdf

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How can I protect my child from being poisoned at home?

Every year in Canada, about seven children under the age of 15 die from poisoning and another 1,700 are hospitalized for serious injuries. Nearly two-thirds of poisoning incidents happen to children age between the ages of one and four. Toddlers are particularly at risk for poisoning because they're curious and often want to explore their environment by putting things in their mouths. Unlike adults, young children may swallow things even if they don't taste or smell good.

There are many common products that are probably already in your home that can poison children or make them very sick. Medication is the leading cause of poisoning in children.

Here is a list of items that can cause poisoning:

- **medicine and vitamins**, including iron pills, sleeping pills, anti-depressants, codeine, heart pills, pain relief pills, cough or cold medicines, antibiotics and birth control pills
- **some plants**, including common indoor plants like philodendron and dieffenbachia
- **cosmetics**, including cologne, perfume, aftershave lotion, mouthwash and nail polish or nail polish remover
- **home cleaning products**, including bleach, oven cleaner, toilet bowl cleaner, furniture polish and drain opener
- **pesticides**, including insect spray and mouse poison
- **paint and paint thinner**
- **gasoline**
- **antifreeze**
- **alcohol**
- **carbon monoxide.**

Here are some tips to help protect your child from poisons in your home:

- Keep medicines, cleaning products and other poisons in a cabinet high up and out of your child's reach, and keep that cabinet locked. Before you know it, your child may be able to use a chair or an open drawer to climb up and reach top shelves.
- Even medicines or cleaners that are in containers with child-resistant caps should be locked up too. Children have been able to open these.
- Always keep products in their original containers with the label showing what is in the container. If you move poisonous substances to another container, children may not be able to tell that they are harmful and could try to eat or drink them.
- Keep purses and briefcases out of your child's reach. They may have dangerous products like nail polish or medicines inside.
- Avoid using cleaning products when children are close by. Many children who are poisoned by a home cleaning product get access to that poison while a parent is using it.
- Know the names of the plants growing in and around your home. This way, if a child eats a plant, you will be able to describe it to the hospital or poison information centre.
- Watch your child closely when visiting other people's homes. They may have dangerous products within easy reach of your child.
- If your doctor has given you medicine for your child, be sure to read the label and measure the medicine every time you give it.
- Install a carbon monoxide detector near sleeping areas. Carbon monoxide detectors have been effective in preventing deaths due to carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Keep the phone number for your regional poison information centre near the phone.

If you think your child may have been poisoned, call your regional poison information centre or call 911.

Ontario
1-800-268-9017
(416) 813-5900

Quebec
1-800-463-5060

Newfoundland and Labrador
(709) 722-1110

Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island
1-800-565-8161 (Nova Scotia and P.E.I only)
(902) 470-8161

Manitoba
(204) 787-2591

Saskatchewan
1-866-454-1212 (Saskatchewan only)

Alberta
1-800-332-1414 (Alberta only)
(403) 944-1414

British Columbia
1-800-567-8911 (outside greater Vancouver area only)
(604) 682-5050

The following provinces do not have Poison Information Centres but these are the numbers to call for poisoning information:

Northwest Territories
1-867-669-4100

Yukon
1-867-393-8700

Nunavut
1-867-979-7300

New Brunswick
911

Additional resources:

[Healthy Environments for Children - What You Can Do!](#) — [Health Canada](#)

[Pesticide Use in and Around the Home](#) — [Pest Management Regulatory Agency](#)

[Poison Information Centre](#) — [SickKids](#)

[Putting poison in its place](#) — [SMARTRISK](#)

[Safe Kids Canada](#)

[Stay Safe - An Education Program About Hazard Symbols!](#) — [Health Canada](#)

Last Modified Date: January 2007

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2.9 Unintentional Poisonings

Of Canadian children (0-14 years), those under 5 years of age represented 86% of deaths and hospitalizations for unintentional poisonings for the period 1994-2003 (Safe Kids Canada, 2006).

Children (1-4 years) are most frequently poisoned (Health Canada, 1997):

- in the child's home (97%), of which:
 - 45% occurred in the living room or bedroom.
 - 17% occurred in the kitchen.
 - 11% occurred in the bathroom and laundry room.
- when the child was playing.

Medication is the leading cause of poisoning in children. Among medications, iron pills are a leading cause of death for children (Safe Kids Canada, 2006).

Other products frequently reported to Poison Control Centres include:

- Acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol) and Acetylsalicylic acid (e.g. Aspirin).
- Cold medications.
- Essential oils.
- Rubbing alcohol.
- Nail polish remover.

Other products that children have been poisoned by include:

- Alcohol, illegal drugs.
- Air fresheners.
- Bleach.
- Dishwasher detergent.
- Laundry detergent.
- Oven cleaner.
- Paint, varnish.

References: Health Canada, (1997). *For the safety of Canadian children and youth – from injury data to preventive measures*. Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada: Ottawa

Safe Kids Canada, (2006). *Child & Youth Unintentional Injury 1994-2003. Ten Years in Review*. Downloaded August 2006 from: <http://www.sickkids.ca/safekidscanada/>