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Chief Provincial Public Health Officer Position Statement:

Cosmetic Pesticides

Pesticides are designed to kill a variety of insects, fungi, weeds and other pests. If humans are exposed by the right route to a toxic dose of any pesticide, they can, of course, also be affected. For this reason, it is essential that pesticides always be used according to the manufacturer's directions. Health Canada registers only those products that provide effective management of pest problems and that can be used safely when label directions are followed.

However, a number of studies have demonstrated association between a variety of pesticides, in variable doses and exposure routes, and negative health effects. These associations, although they do not prove that pesticides – used as prescribed – cause these health effects, do raise concerns about their use.

In the face of this uncertainty, it is prudent, from a health perspective, to weigh the potential benefits of pesticide use with the uncertain risk of human pesticide exposure. Simply stated, if pesticides are not needed, they should not be used.

Pregnant women and children should always be priority populations for avoiding risk, regardless of the nature and magnitude of that risk. Whether they live in rural Manitoba or urban centres, their exposure to pesticide should be minimized.

Last reviewed: December, 2015