

## Yellow's Green Corner:

# Environmental News

in Collaboration with the Earthrose Institute ([www.earthrose.org](http://www.earthrose.org))

### **Growing Healthy Children**

Children face unique hazards from pesticide and other toxic chemical exposure. They take in more pesticides relative to their body weight than adults in the food they eat and air they breathe. Their developing organ systems often make them more sensitive to toxic exposure. The U.S. EPA, National Academy of Sciences, and American Public Health Association, among others, have voiced concerns about the danger that pesticides pose to children. The body of evidence in scientific literature shows that pesticide exposure can adversely affect a child's neurological, respiratory, immune, and endocrine system, even at low levels. Several pesticides, including organophosphates are also known to cause or exacerbate asthma symptoms.

### **Pesticide Exposure During Pregnancy**

Pregnant women exposed to household pesticides may increase the risk of their children developing leukemia, according to a recent study conducted in France. These findings add more weight to the idea that pesticides play a role in childhood blood cancers and may shed light on the actual causes of the disease. In this study, parents of leukemia patients were more likely to have used pesticides and insecticide either at home or at work. Exposure to these chemicals is a risk factor for blood cancers,

particularly if children are exposed in the womb, the authors conclude.

The associations between pesticide use during pregnancy and childhood leukemia are strong enough that limiting or eliminating their use in preparation for and during pregnancy is advisable, according researchers and health advocates.



### **Common Household Chemicals**

There is a growing body of research that has identified associations between childhood leukemias, cancers, and developmental and neurological problems and exposure during pregnancy to a growing number of household chemicals. This list includes, but is not limited to, paints, glues and solvents, cigarette smoke and pesticides. The broad class of compounds that may increase risk indicates that there may be common features associated with these compounds. Alternatively, and perhaps more



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importantly, it confirms that children and babies in particular, with their growing and developing organs and tissues, are especially sensitive to chemicals in the environment.

#### **Practicing the Precautionary Principle**

The precautionary principle aims to provide guidance for protecting public health and the environment in the face of uncertain risks.

“When an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically.” For more information, visit:

[www.takingprecaution.org](http://www.takingprecaution.org)

#### **Web sites for more information:**

- [www.pesticidefreeschools.org](http://www.pesticidefreeschools.org)
- [www.pesticideinfo.org](http://www.pesticideinfo.org)
- [www.panna.org](http://www.panna.org)

#### **Research**

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