KIDS AND CHLORPYRIFOS

Despite research showing the dangers of Chlorpyrifos, the most commonly used food pesticide, EPA Administrator Pruitt sided with Dow Chemicals over his own scientists to continue use of the neurotoxin on fruits and vegetables, putting kids at risk.

"EPA is committed to considering risks to children in developing standards to protect human health and the environment."

It's time for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to stop just talking the talk and start walking the walk, and they can start by banning the dangerous pesticide chlorpyrifos, which has been known to cause serious developmental issues in children.

Chlorpyrifos is one of the most widely used insecticides in the United States and is used on everything from corn to strawberries and broccoli. In large doses, chlorpyrifos acts as a neurotoxin, and can even cause death, which poses a huge risk for product manufacturers, sprayers, and field workers. In addition, studies have shown that even in very small amounts, this pesticide can have a severe effect on the neurological development of children. Although the EPA has banned chlorpyrifos as a household product, it can still be found in raw foods, juices and baby food. Despite the fact that the EPA themselves has stated that "chlorpyrifos posed significant risks to children, even at very low exposures," Scott Pruitt has rescinded its ban and taken a huge step backwards in the protection of the health of children and families.

WHO IS MOST AT RISK?

Chlorpyrifos manufacturers, farmers and farm workers, pregnant women, and children.

HOW ARE THEY EXPOSED?

Farm and factory exposure usually occurs through mixing, handling and applying the nerve agent pesticide as well as from entering the fields after they have been sprayed. Even with the maximum personal protective gear and safety measures, workers are still exposed to unsafe levels, and field workers are allowed on the field long before the chemical has reached safe levels.

Others are exposed through residual pesticides in raw fruits and vegetables, juices, baby food, drinking water contamination, and toxic spray drift from pesticide applications. Children experience greater exposure because they tend to put their hands in their mouth more and they tend to eat and drink more contaminated products.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS?

Poisoning

During acute chlorpyrifos poisoning, the enzyme that regulates nerve impulses is suppressed, affecting the nervous system, respiratory system and cardiovascular system. Its immediate systems include coughing, shortness of breath, muscle contractions, dizziness and blurred vision and long term, chlorpyrifos can cause weakness, numbness and cramping in limbs and confusion. Some of these symptoms may take years to subside, if at all. Similar effects can even result from lower level chronic exposures. Severe poisonings can end in paralysis of limbs and respiratory muscles and ultimately, death. According

to an EPA report, chlorpyrifos is one of the leading causes of acute pesticide poisoning in the U.S.

Child Development

Chronic exposure levels of chlorpyrifos were found to be 4.6 times the "acceptable" level for children. According to many scientific studies, prenatal and childhood exposure to chlorpyrifos is associated with lower birth weight, reduced IQ, higher rates of attention disorders, and higher rates of movement disorders. The strongest of these studies was done at Columbia Center for Children's Environmental Health. In this test, "highly" exposed three-year-olds scored 6.5 points lower on motor development tests and 3.3 points lower on cognitive development test then toddlers with "low" exposure. These tests also showed higher rates of movement disorders by the age of eleven. Many years of research indicate that chlorpyrifos is linked to significant harm to children, including diminished cognitive ability and diminished physical abilities.

WHAT'S UP WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY? A TIMELINE

- Chlorpyrifos was first registered as an insecticide in 1965. According to the EPA, it's the "most used conventional insecticide" in the U.S. with roughly 6 million pounds used on around 10 million acres between 2009 and 2013.
- The EPA banned chlorpyrifos' use for residential purposes in 2000, except in select cases, including when contained in ant and roach bait products.
- In 2015, after more than eight years of legal action from Pesticide Action Network, EarthJustice and Natural Resources Defense Council, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed a total ban of chlorpyrifos due to the fact that they were "unable to conclude that the risk from aggregate exposure from the use of chlorpyrifos meets the safety standard."
- Then, in 2016, the EPA released a risk analysis report saying that all food exposures exceeded safe levels and therefore, no safe use for the pesticide. Typically, in order to allow a product to be used, the EPA must show a reasonable certainty of no harm under certain conditions of use. The EPA did not feel like this was true with the studies that had been released.
- On March 29, 2017, the EPA under Administrator Pruitt (the day after meeting with the pesticide manufacturer, Dow Chemicals) released a report refusing to ban chlorpyrifos because of scientific "uncertainty." They will not review this decision, or the health effects of chlorpyrifos until 2022.

It is clear that chlorpyrifos is damaging to the health of children, pregnant women and farm workers. The outstanding uncertainties lie in the how and to what degree — mechanism and in the extent of the damage. A growing body of evidence links chlorpyrifos to severe health problems in children and adults. The health of American families should not be an uncertainty, and Scott Pruitt needs to start prioritizing our health over corporate interest.

WHAT CAN I DO?

There are many organizations and individuals taking action — from legal action to petitions, legislation to research. Here are a few ways to get further involved.

Protect yourself and your kids.

- Try to buy organic fruits and vegetables when possible — particularly produce that is likely to have chlorpyrifos residue: strawberries; apples; broccoli; soy; corn; and citrus
- Farmworker, manufacturer or others facing risk of high exposure should take additional precautions, including frequent blood tests of cholinesterase levels. Wear protective clothing, removing gloves, wash them with soap and water. Keep work clothes separate, and wash separately after each use.

Make change!

- Tell the EPA to ban chlorpyrifos.
- Talk to your school or workplace about joining the campaign to keep this toxic pesticide out of our food, our water, our schools and yards, and our bodies.
- Call on government officials to make local and statewide policies to protect our health, and to hold the EPA accountable.

Sierra Club National
2101 Webster Street, Suite 1300
Oakland, CA 94612
(415) 977-5500

Sierra Club Legislative
50 F Street, NW, Eighth Floor
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 547-1141

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