

Keeping Homes Healthy and Pest Free

Reaching for that bottle of pesticide is a quick fix for unwanted guests in your home. Unfortunately, many pesticides are full of toxins that are harmful to humans, animals and our environment alike. There are, however, things you can do that are equally effective and safer alternatives than using harmful chemical pesticides in your home. Integrated pest management (IPM) techniques can help make your home pest free without compromising your own health - or wallet.

Why Limit Pesticides?

- Pesticides can negatively affect our short and long-term health. The National Institute of Health finds that over exposure to pesticides can cause headaches, difficulty breathing, nausea, cramps, worsen existing conditions, and increase your risks for cancer.
- Pesticides can enter our bodies through skin contact, breathing, and swallowing.
- Harmful pesticides can pollute our drinking water supplies and farm crops. Pesticides that are overused in homes or improperly disposed of add to air pollution and enter waterways through our drains and soils. Pesticides have been linked to decreasing bee and butterfly populations, pollinators whose absence can severely impact our food supply.

TAKE ACTION

Prevent pests from entering your home by removing the things that attract them inside and blocking their entryways.

- Keep all foods stored away in sealed containers. Ripe fruits especially should be kept in the fridge. Clean up any food or water spills around the home.
- Take the trash out regularly and make sure your garbage cans themselves are clean. Keep other debris or firewood away from the house.
- Control moisture and water levels by cleaning up any water dishes or fixing leaky faucets. Keep the kitchen and bathroom dry.
- Regularly clean your floors and furniture, especially if you have pets. Wet mopping is best.
- Seal off cracks and open spaces around baseboards, cabinets, pipes, moldings, and maintain any window or air vent screens.
- For pests already in the home first try using physical traps or vacuuming nests. For persistent pests try using lower risk pesticides like boric acid.
- Always dispose of pesticides properly to prevent contaminating the soil or drinking water supplies.
- Become familiar with EWG's Dirty Dozen™ list of fruits and vegetables that contain a high amount of pesticide residue.
- Rather than spraying your lawn with harmful chemical pesticides, start a backyard compost. Visit the WHE website for instructions!

Helps In More Ways Than One:

- Using IPM instead of chemical pesticides can help you keep your home a safe and healthy space for children and the elderly.
- IPM focuses on long-term pest prevention and treatments, which can save you money and effort in the long run, compared to short term pesticide use.