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10 Tips to Laundering Pesticide Soiled Clothing

Michigan State University Extension Service

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# 10 TIPS

FOR

## LAUNDERING PESTICIDE SOILED CLOTHING

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Proper handling and washing of pesticide contaminated clothing is important to protect you and your family's health.

The following guidelines can help you properly clean pesticide contaminated clothing and protect other clothing from pesticides, too.

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# 10 TIPS

## for LAUNDERING PESTICIDE SOILED CLOTHING

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Proper handling and washing of pesticide contaminated clothing is important to protect you and your family's health.

The following guidelines can help you properly clean pesticide contaminated clothing and protect other clothing from pesticides, too.

# 1

## STORE AND WASH PESTICIDE SOILED CLOTHING *SEPARATELY* FROM OTHER FAMILY LAUNDRY

While laundering, the pesticide removed from soiled clothing is deposited on other clothes in the wash.

# 2

## PRERINSE CLOTHING BEFORE WASHING

Prerinsing helps remove a large amount of pesticide, especially if it is a wettable powder. Prerinsing can be done by hosing off clothing outdoors, rinsing in a container or in the washing machine.

# 3

## WASH PESTICIDE SOILED CLOTHING IN HOT WATER

Water 140 degrees or higher removes more pesticide than other wash temperatures.

# 4

## USE A FULL TUB OF WATER AND REGULAR WASH CYCLE

Water should circulate freely to remove as much of the pesticide as possible.

# 5

## USE A HEAVY DUTY LIQUID DETERGENT

Heavy duty liquid detergents are better at removing problem pesticides. They are especially helpful in removing oil-based pesticides. Use the amount of detergent recommended on the bottle. Neither bleach nor ammonia seem to affect pesticide removal (**never** mix these two products together).

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# 6

## WASH THE CLOTHING 2-3 TIMES

Repeated washing is necessary if the pesticide used is highly toxic or if large areas of the garment are soaked.

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# 7

## LINE DRY WHENEVER POSSIBLE

Exposure to sunlight may help break down pesticides.

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# 8

## CLEAN THE LAUNDRY EQUIPMENT

Run an empty load using hot water and detergent. Wipe the inside of the dryer with a damp cloth.

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# 9

## LAUNDRY CLOTHING AFTER EACH DAY'S WEAR

When clothing is repeatedly soiled before it is laundered, more pesticide remains in the clothing after washing, and there are higher concentrations of chemicals in the rinse water.

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# 10

## DISCARD CLOTHING THAT IS HEAVILY CONTAMINATED WITH A HIGHLY TOXIC PESTICIDE

However, clothing soiled by low toxicity pesticides can be laundered effectively and safely even if large areas are heavily soiled. In general, as the concentration of the active ingredient in the pesticide increases, the removal of pesticide residue by laundering decreases.

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# MORE TIPS...

Remember that pesticides can be absorbed through the skin . . . SO

- Wear rubber gloves to handle pesticide soiled clothing.
- Make a disposable hamper for pesticide soiled clothing. Line a cardboard box with a garbage bag to use ONLY for pesticide soiled clothing.
- Dispose of the gloves and the disposable hamper at the end of the pesticide season in the same way as you do the pesticide containers.
- Following the laundry recommendations will help reduce exposure to pesticides.
- Minimize exposure to pesticides. Encourage everyone who handles pesticides to practice good safety and personal hygiene habits. Be sure to wash hands before eating, smoking, or going to the bathroom.

Research related to pesticides and clothing is currently being conducted in several states including Michigan, Illinois, Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa, North Dakota, Minnesota, California, and Georgia. Recommendations presented in this publication have been drawn from these investigations.

If you have further questions, contact

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