



# *FACT SHEET*

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# *RESMETHRIN*

## **What is resmethrin?**

Resmethrin is a man-made chemical but is very similar to a natural group of chemicals called pyrethrins that come from plants. Resmethrin is a common insecticide used to control mosquitoes and other biting flies. Related insecticides are used in pet shampoos, sprays and products used around horses and horse stables.

## **Will contact with resmethrin affect my health?**

Resmethrin is not a carcinogen in animal studies and is unlikely to cause endocrine disruption, birth defects, neurological disorders or internal organ damage at the levels commonly encountered from following label directions. Some man-made pyrethrins are known to cause stinging and burning after skin contact. These types of health effects have not been associated with exposure to resmethrin. Dermatitis and asthma-like symptoms have been associated with the natural pyrethrins; however, similar effects are much less likely with the man-made pyrethrins, including resmethrin.

## **What happens to resmethrin in the environment?**

Resmethrin spray stays in the air for a very short period of time. It is removed from the air when droplets of spray contact surfaces. Resmethrin breaks down or degrades very quickly in sunlight. Rain washes away any remaining resmethrin. Resmethrin can remain bound to soil for several weeks until it is broken down by bacteria. Fish and bees are more susceptible to resmethrin than birds or mammals.

## **When will resmethrin be used to control mosquitoes?**

The use of resmethrin is only part of a mosquito management program that includes larval control and reduction of mosquito breeding habitats. When the risk of human exposure to West Nile virus is high; the application of resmethrin, either by ground or air, may be the only alternative to reduce populations of infected adult mosquitoes. Decisions to use resmethrin will be considered carefully. However, its low toxicity, low application levels, and short-term environmental persistence make the risks of its use extremely low.

## **What should I do to reduce exposure to pesticides during mosquito control spraying?**

There are a number of common sense steps recommended by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to help reduce possible exposure to pesticides during spraying:

- Look for notices about spraying in the newspapers and stay tuned to radio and TV for announcements.
- Whenever possible, remain indoors with windows closed and air conditioning turned off when spraying is taking place.
- If you have to remain outdoors, avoid eye contact with the spray. If you get pesticide spray in your eyes, immediately rinse them with water or eye drops.
- Your child's health should not be affected by the low levels of pesticides used in mosquito control. However, bring laundry and toys indoors before spraying begins and wash with soap and water if exposed to pesticides during spraying.
- Bring your pets indoors, and cover ornamental fish ponds to avoid direct exposure.
- Cover outdoor tables and play equipment or rinse them off with water after spraying is finished.
- Cover swimming pool surfaces when it is feasible (given the small concentrations of pesticides used, however, special precautions or waiting periods are not usually necessary for outdoor swimming pools).
- Wash exposed skin surfaces with soap and water if you come in contact with pesticides.
- Wash any exposed fruits and vegetables, such as homegrown or purchased from an outside vendor, with water before storing, cooking or eating them.
- There is no need to relocate during spraying, but consult your physician if you have serious medical concerns regarding the spraying.

## **What should I do if I have medical questions about resmethrin?**

- If you suspect that you or your child are reacting to resmethrin, call your physician. If you feel that it is an emergency, call 911 or your local emergency service.
- You and your doctor can get specific medical information about the active ingredients in repellents and other pesticides by calling the National Pesticide Information Center (NPIC) at 1-800-858-7378. Information can also be obtained from the Connecticut Poison Control Center, 24-hours a day, 7 days a week at 1-800-343-2722.

If you have any additional questions about resmethrin, call the Environmental and Occupational Health Assessment Program at 860-509-7740.