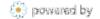
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FROM Parenting MAGAZINE

Weed Out Lawn Chemicals

How to limit your child's exposure to potential toxins while she's playing outside

By Celeste Perron

Watching your child roll around in the grass is one of the season's sweetest pleasures, but the cocktail of fertilizer, weed killers, and insecticides on your lawn could be unhealthy, says Gina Solomon, M.D., an environmental scientist for the Natural Resources Defense Council.

Although these chemicals have been approved by the Environmental Protection Agency, and may be fine for adults and teenagers, a safe exposure level for young kids hasn't been adequately established. Not only are little kids more vulnerable to toxins, they're also more likely to get down and dirty in the grass — and then put their hands in their mouths. To limit your child's exposure:

Have your family take off their shoes when coming into the house from the yard. Garden chemicals that are tracked inside stay for good, since there's no rain or sun to break them down.

Don't mow the lawn too often (good news!). Grass that's been allowed to grow to three or four inches is healthier than a lawn that's constantly being trimmed — so you won't have to use as many products.

Switch to all-natural products. Some widely available options that work well are Terracycle Lawn Fertilizer, Weed Aside, BurnOut Weed & Grass Killer, and Garden Safe Lawn & Garden Insect Killer.

Parenting, July 2007

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