PEST TREATMENT — GUIDE

Pesticide safety for kids and pets

Prepare your home, read the label and get clear return instructions using EPA and NPIC resources.

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Tell the provider about children and pets before it selects a treatment. Include where they play, crawl, eat and sleep. Ask for the product names and labels before the appointment. A general claim such as pet friendly does not replace product-specific instructions.

NPIC explains that risk depends on the toxicity of a pesticide and the amount of exposure. Children can be more sensitive than adults. The useful question is how the plan reduces exposure in your home.

Before treatment

- Ask whether prevention, repair or nonchemical control can address the pest.
- Put away toys, food, feeding bowls and pet bedding as the instructions require.
- Tell the provider about fish tanks, birds and other animals with special needs.
- Confirm which rooms and outdoor areas must be kept clear.
- Ask how bait and devices will be kept beyond the reach of children and pets.

NPIC advises removing pets and their belongings from the application area. Aquariums need specific protection. Ask for a plan suited to the product and your animals. Do not improvise with a cover or ventilation change without checking the instructions.

Read the label before use

Use EPA's pesticide-label resources to understand the purpose of the label. Check the target pest, permitted site, precautions and first-aid section. Follow the label used in your country. A US article is not permission to apply a product in Canada.

Keep pesticides in their original containers, away from children. NPIC warns against using food or beverage containers for storage or mixing. Do not leave bait accessible because it looks like a small quantity. NPIC notes that food ingredients in bait can attract pets.

Before return

Ask the provider to write down the access restrictions for each area. NPIC advises keeping pets away until treated areas are dry and well ventilated, while following any more specific label instructions. Dryness alone does not override a longer restriction on the label.

Ask what to clean and what to leave undisturbed. Keep a copy of the treatment record, including product names, locations and the provider's contact details. Give caregivers the same instructions. A message left only with the person who booked the visit may not reach everyone who enters the home.

If exposure may have occurred

Use the product's first-aid instructions and contact the appropriate poison service, medical professional or veterinarian. Have the product container or label available. Seek urgent help for an emergency. This guide does not diagnose poisoning or set a safe dose.

If the provider cannot explain preparation, access restrictions or the product being used, pause the booking and request clear written information.

Sources

- Pesticides and Children. Fetched and checked 2026-11-10.
- Pesticide Use Around Pets. Fetched and checked 2026-11-10.
- Pesticide Labels | US EPA. Fetched and checked 2026-11-10.
- Tips for Selecting a Pest Control Service | US EPA. Fetched and checked 2026-11-10.

Frequently asked questions

Does natural mean safe for children or pets?

Do not use that claim as a safety test. Read the product label and ask how exposure will be prevented.