

2 Aug 19 Chlorpyrifos

<https://advocacy.organicconsumers.org/page/11029/action/1>

California, Hawaii and New York Banned this Pesticide that Harms Children's Brains. Ask Your State to Do the Same.

Chlorpyrifos, manufactured by DowDuPont, is a neurotoxic organophosphate insecticide that, even at very low levels, has been linked to severe birth defects, brain damage and mental disorders in children, including [ADHD and autism](#).

[Hawaii](#), [California](#) and [New York](#) (awaiting the governor's signature) have passed laws banning chlorpyrifos.

[Connecticut](#) and [Oregon](#) are poised to join them. Bills to ban chlorpyrifos ban have also been introduced in [Maryland](#), [New Jersey](#) and [Virginia](#).

Under President Obama, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed a ban on chlorpyrifos.

Trump [reversed](#) that decision, provoking a [legal battle](#).

Members of Congress have introduced legislation to [reinstate the ban](#). But some states aren't waiting for Congress—they're taking action now.

In 2016, EPA scientists [confirmed](#) the urgency of a ban on chlorpyrifos. The agency's scientists concluded:

- Chlorpyrifos contaminates the national food supply at levels that threaten children's health
- There is no safe level of chlorpyrifos in drinking water
- The greatest risks are to agricultural communities and workers confronted with contaminated fields, air, dust, water and food.

Chlorpyrifos is the fourth most common [pesticide](#) found in human foods.

If you and your family eat non-organic produce, it's likely you're being exposed to chlorpyrifos. The EPA allows chlorpyrifos to be sprayed on [more than 50](#) fruits, vegetables and nuts.

By volume, chlorpyrifos is most used on corn and soybeans. But it's also used on more than half of all **apples** and **broccoli** sold in the U.S., and is found on **citrus** and **melons even after being washed and peeled**. The good news is that going organic can [significantly reduce](#) your exposure.

Chlorpyrifos's capacity to cause twitching, tremors, slurred speech, paralysis and death made it a potent insecticide—and a very dangerous home bug spray. Marketed as Dursban and sold under the [Raid, Hartz and Black Flag](#) labels for indoor termite, ant and flea control, chlorpyrifos caused [7,000 acute poisonings](#) per year in the 1990s.

When the lawsuits on behalf of disabled children started piling up, Dow

submitted to an [agreement](#) with the EPA to end indoor use in 2000.

The abrupt end to the residential use of chlorpyrifos provided [researchers](#) two distinct populations to study: children who were born before the ban, and who had relatively high levels of exposure, and those born afterward, whose levels were much lower. As The Intercept [reported](#):

The children in the higher exposure group were more than twice as likely to be mentally delayed; more than five times as likely to have symptoms of pervasive developmental disorder, a diagnosis that was later folded into autism spectrum disorder; more than six times as likely to have ADHD-type symptoms; and more than 11 times as likely to have symptoms of other attention disorders . . . At age 7, the highly exposed children . . . had lower IQs and deficits in working memory.

Another [study](#) found that, “while the nationwide autism rate is now one in 68, for women who lived near fields where chlorpyrifos was sprayed during their second trimester, the chance of having a child with autism was closer to one in 21.”

Beginning in 2002, the [Natural Resources Defense Council](#) and other groups began petitioning the EPA to review the science that showed how chlorpyrifos disrupted brain development. Earth Justice sued the EPA demanding action on chlorpyrifos in 2007, 2010, 2012 and 2014, finally forcing the agency to complete an updated [human health risk assessment](#) in 2016.

The EPA’s new risk assessment should have resulted in a ban on chlorpyrifos. But with the election of Donald Trump that same year, DowDuPont saw an opportunity—and they had the money—to get the ban overturned.

As the Union of Concerned Scientists reported, **Dow Chemical gave \$1 million to fund President Trump's inaugural activities and had spent over \$5.2 million on lobbying in the first quarter of 2017.** EPA Administrator **Scott Pruitt** (who later resigned in disgrace) met with the CEO of Dow Chemical and then announced his decision to allow continued use of chlorpyrifos.

Until the EPA starts making science-based decisions again, we have no other recourse than to turn to the states.

TAKE ACTION: Ask your state legislators to ban chlorpyrifos! (If your state has already taken action, please change your letter to a thank-you note).