












# PESTICIDES | WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

## 1 Possible sources of exposure

-  Food
-  Breast milk
-  Contaminated drinking water
-  Prenatal ingestion
-  Occupational exposure (processing, mixing and applying pesticides in the field)
-  Contaminated air and dust
-  Residual air concentrations at home
-  Occupational exposure (in contact with pesticides directly to the skin)
-  Contaminated surfaces (residential use of biocides)
-  Handling pets (after treatment with pesticides)
-  Medical product to combat head lice and scabies

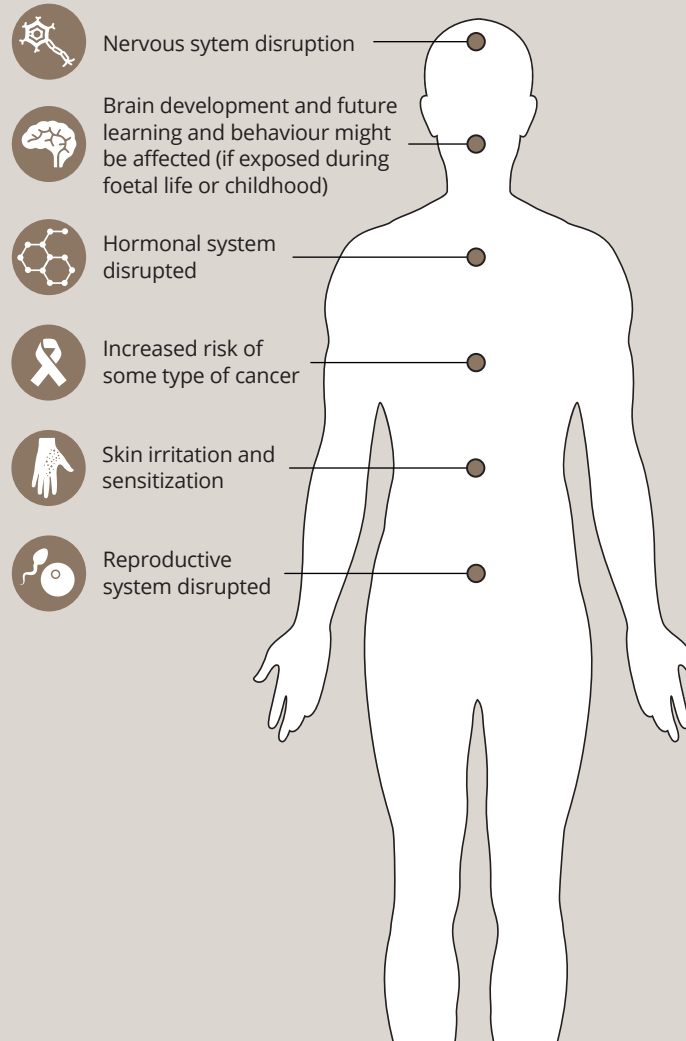
## 2 How can pesticides enter your body?

Via ingestion












Via inhalation

Via dermal absorption

## 3 How might pesticides affect your health?



## 4 How can you reduce your exposure to pesticides?

-  **Never** remove labels from products
  -  **Consider** choosing organic food
  -  **Consider** consuming European commodities, as pesticide residues are often higher in products produced outside the EU and they can also contain pesticides that are not allowed for use in the EU
  -  **Rinse** fruits and vegetables before consuming them, remove the skin or outer leaves and wash your hands after touching unwashed fruits and vegetables
  -  **Use** pesticide-free methods for pest prevention in your home and garden
  -  **Prefer** to use a physical barrier for avoiding mosquitoes
  -  **To help** control fleas without pesticides, comb pets with a flea comb, regularly bath pets with pesticide-free shampoo, and wash pet bedding
- If you apply pesticides:**
-  **Read and follow** the label instructions for use, storage, and disposal
  -  **Wear** protective clothing and equipment
  -  **Always keep** children and pets away
  -  **After** you are done, **wash** your hands, face, and clothing

## Where can they possibly be found?

Pesticides might be found in food, mainly fruit, vegetables and cereals.

Pesticides are widely used to protect plants and plant products in agriculture, forestry and horticulture from attack by fungi, insects and competing plants. They are also used to control harmful organisms to human or animal health, it can for example be disinfectants, a mosquito repellent, wood preservatives, rodenticides or antifouling paint for boats.

There are several policies in the European Union for protecting the public, workers and the environment from harmful exposures to pesticides such as restricting the use of certain pesticide active substances based on their level of toxicity. Other are related to setting maximum limits for pesticide residues in food, infant formulae, water for public consumption and in animal feed. The "Farm to Fork Strategy" sets an ambitious goal of pesticides by 50% and to reduce by at least 20% the use of fertilizers by 2030.

For further information on pesticides, please visit the 'HBM4EU Factsheet' section.