



MIDWEST PESTICIDE
ACTION CENTER

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT: A PRIMER

A FACTSHEET FROM MIDWEST PESTICIDE ACTION CENTER

Pests, like mice and roaches, spread disease, contaminate food, upset customers and damage property.

Over the years, many Americans relied on one strategy to control pests: pesticides. However, recent research reminds us pesticides are poison. Exposure at home and work is linked with cancer and birth defects as well as certain neurological, behavioral, reproductive, hormonal, and immune system disorders.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a safer way to control pests.

WHAT IS INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT (IPM)?

All creatures require food, water and shelter to survive. Pests live inside buildings where these needs are met. Block pests out and remove their sources of food, water and shelter and you will need fewer pesticides to control pests – keeping you, your staff and your customers safe.

There are five steps to IPM. Begin with these suggestions or hire a pest control company that provides IPM services. A complete resource center is available at spcpweb.org:

- 1. Keep Pests Out:** Caulk or cement cracks and holes on the outside of the building. Install door sweeps and avoid propping doors open. Screen windows. Place dumpsters far from your backdoor. Inspect deliveries for pests.
- 2. Remove Pests' Food & Water:** Good sanitation (especially in areas where food is prepared, stored or eaten) is a great way to control most pests. Clean behind equipment and appliances. Store food in pest proof containers. Make sure all garbage cans have tight fitting lids. Repair leaky pipes and remove standing water. Keep drains clean and unclogged.
- 3. Reduce Pests' Shelter:** A messy room provides many places for pests to hide. Get rid of clutter! Seal holes in the walls and cracks along baseboards. Use open shelving that is easy to clean under.
- 4. Monitor for Pests:** Checking for pests will help you find out early if pests are inside your home or business. Place insect sticky traps in kitchens, bathrooms, pantries, storage closets or problem areas and check them regularly. A professional pest control company can help you monitor for pests.
- 5. Treat Existing Pest Problems:** STOP routine pesticide spraying. Spray pesticides expose people and the environment to greater risk. Use traps and bait stations to safely eliminate pests instead. There are lots of non-chemical ways to control pests. A pest control company can even use a specialized vacuum cleaner to get rid of roaches.

WHY USE IPM?

Save money: Many people report spending less money on pest control by using IPM. In some cases, IPM may cost more up front (caulking cracks and installing doorsweeps) but over time, you will need less pesticide and maybe fewer visits from your pest control company.

More effective: IPM can cost less because it addresses the root cause of pest problems. By removing what attracts pests to the building and allows them access, fewer pests will come around – leading to less pesticide use.

Safer: IPM protects you, your staff and the environment from unnecessary pesticide application. Reducing pesticide use will reduce pesticide resistance, ensuring the chemical controls work when we really need them.

HOW DO I BEGIN?

Start with the basic steps listed above. Talk with your pest control company - read *How Do I Know I'm Receiving IPM* for tips on ensuring IPM services from your contractor. If you're hiring a new company, review *How to Hire an IPM Contractor* before signing a contract. Review online resources at www.midwestpesticideaction.org and call Midwest Pesticide Action Center at (773) 878-7378 with questions.



Midwest Pesticide Action Center is dedicated to reducing the health risks and environmental impacts of pesticides and promoting safer alternatives.

4611 N. Ravenswood Ave., Suite 107, Chicago, Illinois 60640 Tel: 773-878-7378 Fax: 773-878-8250 Web: www.midwestpesticideaction.org