

# Reducing Exposure to Malathion

Malathion is an organophosphate insecticide used since 1956 by public health officials when necessary to control mosquito populations. Malathion is also the insecticide used by the Southeastern Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation to treat cotton fields for boll weevils. When applied in accordance with the rate of application and safety precautions specified on the label, malathion can be used without posing unreasonable risks to human health or the environment. Because of the very small amount of active ingredient released per acre of ground, EPA's scientists found that for all exposure scenarios considered, exposures to malathion were hundreds or even thousands of times below an amount that might pose a health concern.

The proper application of pesticides should not result in the drifting of chemical off target. However, if you still have concerns, here are some suggestions for reducing exposure *before* and *during* spraying in your area.

- If you or any family member has chemical sensitivity, contact the Southeastern Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation office in your work unit to tell them where you live. The Foundation may adjust application techniques to minimize exposure when spraying in your area.
- Remain indoors when spraying is occurring to prevent exposure to the spray.

Additional steps could include:

- Closing windows and turning off window-unit air conditioners when spraying is taking place in the immediate area.
- Keeping children away from truck-mounted pesticide applicators when they are in use.
- Covering garden vegetables, bird baths, lawn furniture, swimming pools, etc.
- Providing shelter for pets; bringing food and water dishes inside or covering them.

Considerations for Reducing Exposure *After* Spraying:

- Stay indoors for a short period after the spraying.
- Empty and re-fill birdbaths and pet water and food containers. Uncover pools, lawn furniture, and children's' play equipment, taking care not to become contaminated by the items used as covers.
- Wash any potentially contaminated body surfaces promptly with soap and water.