1. What Are Pesticides?
Any substance used to prevent, destroy, repel or mitigate insects, rodents, fungi, weeds, or any other organism considered a pest.

- If the word ends with "cide" it's probably considered a pesticide.
- Pesticides include but are not limited to: insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, rodenticides plant growth regulators, defoliants (pesticides that remove leaves from plants), desiccants (pesticides used for drying plant foliage), and insect repellants.
- Even home products used for disinfecting surfaces are considered pesticides. Always look for an EPA Registration number and read the label on the container.

2. Pesticide Symptoms
Pesticide symptoms vary among different pesticides. For example, pesticides that control weeds (herbicides) can be less toxic than some pesticides used to control insects or rodents.

Symptoms/signs of pesticide exposure may include but are not limited to:

- **mild acute symptoms**
  - headache, fatigue, weakness, dizziness, restlessness, nervousness, perspiration, nausea, diarrhea, loss of appetite, loss of weight, thirst, moodiness, soreness in joints, skin irritation, eye irritation, irritation of the nose and throat

- **moderate acute symptoms**
  - nausea, diarrhea, excessive saliva, stomach cramps, excessive perspiration, trembling, no muscle coordination, muscle twitches, extreme weakness, mental confusion, blurred vision, difficulty in breathing, cough, rapid pulse, flushed or yellow skin, weeping

- **severe acute symptoms:**
  - fever, intense thirst, increased rate of breathing, vomiting, uncontrollable muscle twitches, pinpoint pupils, convulsions, inability to breathe, unconsciousness

**Chronic toxicity** refers to the effects of long-term or repeated lower level exposures to a toxic substance. The effects of chronic exposure do not appear immediately after first exposure and may take years to produce signs and symptoms. Examples of chronic poisoning effects may include:

- Cancer
- Inability to become pregnant
• Birth defects
• Nervous system disorders
• Damage to organs, such as the lungs or liver
• Damage to the immune system

The effects of chronic toxicity, as with acute toxicity, are dose-related. In other words, low-level exposure to chemicals that have potential to cause long-term effects may not cause immediate injury, but repeated exposures through careless handling or misuse can greatly increase the risk of chronic adverse effects.

3. When working where pesticides are applied
   • Attend the required Worker Protection Standard Training to better understand how to protect yourself from pesticides
   • Obey posted warning signs
   • Do not go into a field with a Restricted Entry Interval (REI) that has not expired.
   • Wear proper clothing (long sleeves, gloves, hat, and no short pants)
   • Wash hands and face before meals & toilet use
   • Do not take children with you to work areas
   • Do not take agricultural pesticides or empty pesticide containers home

4. Workers' Rights
   • Employer must assure that workers have been trained under the Worker Protection Standards (WPS) requirements
   • Employer responsible for furnishing decontamination supplies within ¼ mile of workers (soap, water, and single use towels)
   • Report incidents and possible pesticide exposures – an employer can not take a retaliatory action for trying to comply with the Worker Protection Standards
   • Employer must provide transportation to nearest medical facility in the event of an exposure

5. What if you get a pesticide exposure?
   • Notify your supervisor or boss
   • Call, go, or be taken immediately to doctor
   • Note name of pesticide and "restricted entry level" time lapse
   • When trouble breathing allow fresh air and loosen clothes
   • Follow label directions when no other help is available
   • When eyes are contaminated flush with water for 15 minutes

6. Don't bring it home
   • Your car. Keep it vacuumed out and free from pesticide residues.
   • Your clothes and boots/shoes. Work clothes and boots/shoes have a higher possibility of having pesticide residues if you work in areas that have been treated with pesticides. Changes out of work cloths and take a shower or bath before contact with family members.
• **Your skin.** Pesticide residues can be on your skin. Wash your skin with soap and water before you contact other family members.

7. **Protect your family—especially children**
Children are not “little adults”. They may be more vulnerable to environmental exposures than adults because:

• Their bodily systems are still developing.
• They eat more, drink more, and breathe more in proportion to their body size.
• Their behavior can expose them more to chemicals and organisms.
• Change out of your work clothes and bathe with soap and water as soon as you arrive home.
• Avoid contact until you bathe and change into clean clothing.
• Wash clothes separately from the family laundry - run a separate cycle between other family laundry.
• Teach and remind children about the risk of pesticides and their residues.
• Keep the poison control phone number handy.

8. **Other pesticides in the home**
• If using pesticides around the home, read label for safe application.
• Do not use more than the label directions say to use. You can be harming everyone in the home (yourself, spouse, kids, pets).
• Lock up or keeping pesticides out of reach of children.
• Don’t use or store pesticides in containers that are not meant for pesticides (such as soda bottles, mke or juice containers, etc).

9. **Tips for minimizing the need for house-hold pesticides**
• Throw out trash.
• Keep garbage cans covered and away from house.
• Clean up pet and animal waste.
• Empty out any stagnant water.
• Don’t let dirty dishes linger for too long.
• Throw out any leftover food.
• Caulk and seal areas by doors and windows.
• Keep areas in and around the home clean – it prevents pests, thus minimizing the use of pesticides.

**References:**

http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/health/safely.htm
http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/health/safely_sp.htm - (above link in Spanish)