

Reproductive Health Exposures for Women in Agriculture

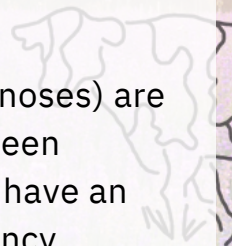
Herbicides are used to kill undesirable plants or weeds. **Exposures:** Mixing and applying herbicides and fungicides up to 2 years before attempting conception is associated with observed lower fertility. **Risk:** Could lower rates of fertility.

Needlestick Injuries are wounds caused by needles that accidentally puncture the skin. **Exposures:** Livestock production hormones (like Oxytocin and Prostaglandins). **Risk:** May cause miscarriage during pregnancy.

Carbon Monoxide is a colorless, odorless, tasteless gas produced by burning gasoline, wood, propane, charcoal, or other fuel. **Exposures:** Livestock buildings and high pressure washers. **Risk:** High for women and elevated risk in unborn fetus including low birth weight, slowed mental development.

Zoonotic Diseases (also known as zoonoses) are caused by infections that spread between animals and people. Pregnant women have an altered immune system during pregnancy. **Exposures:** Direct/indirect contact, vector-borne, foodborne. **Risk:** May cause miscarriage during pregnancy.

Nitrate Toxicity: Infants who are fed formula made with water that is high in nitrate concentrations (>10 mg/L) have the potential to be poisoned. **Risk:** A congenital health disease known as Blue Baby Syndrome.



Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Pesticides

Women who are pregnant or planning a pregnancy, especially those currently performing farm work, should understand the side-effects of pesticide exposure before, during, and after pregnancy. Assistance may be helpful with making decisions that are appropriate for both work and home situations.

Source: EPA - Recognition and Management of Pesticide Poisonings

Coveralls over short-sleeved shirt and pants including chemical-resistant gloves. Be cautious in very warm conditions and avoid the risk of overheating, swelling, and fluid retention in the hands, legs, and feet.



Use a properly fitting, NIOSH-approved two-strap respirator. Limit your time in exposures requiring respiratory protection.



Footwear must be chosen based on the hazards that are present. Avoid natural leather footwear, as it absorbs chemicals. For working with pesticides, chemical-resistant footwear plus socks are recommended.



Protective eyewear intended to shield the eyes against liquid or chemical splash, irritating mists, vapors, and fumes. Use goggles with a good seal, and avoid exposure if possible.



Footwear that will provide good grip and adequate protection against other hazards.



Working with chemicals: Respirator with cartridges (and dust pre-filter) designated for pesticide protection must be used. Read the chemical's label for respiratory protection directions.



For additional information and resources visit: [agrisafe.org/women](https://www.agrisafe.org/women)