

## **Ban All Neurotoxic Organophosphate Pesticides (“BAN OPs”) From Our Food Act of 2022**

[Since the mid-1960s](#), the country’s fruits and vegetables have been sprayed with organophosphate pesticides (OPs) – harmful, man-made chemicals that sound scientific evidence shows impair children’s neurological abilities and poison workers. **All OPs are acutely neurotoxic, meaning that people who are exposed over a short period of time can experience poisoning symptoms, including headaches, dizziness, vomiting, convulsions, and, in extreme cases, respiratory failure leading to death .**

The dire human health consequences of OPs are not accidental. In the 1940s, **the Nazis developed OPs for chemical warfare**. After World War II, chemical companies repurposed this class of nerve agents for agricultural use. With the demise of DDT and similar pesticides in the 1970s, **OP use in agriculture exploded and now they are sprayed on dozens of crops in the United States, including 50 percent of apples, all major citrus crops, corn, table grapes, and cherries, to name just a few.**

People are exposed to OPs through residues on food, contaminated water, and when pesticides drift from where they are applied to where people live, work, go to school, and play. Children often have greater exposure than adults to OPs due to their increased hand-to-mouth activity, and, for their body weight, eat more fruits and vegetables, drink more water, and breathe more air. Farmworkers face the highest exposures and risks from OPs when they apply these pesticides or enter fields where OPs have been sprayed. And farmworkers and their families are more likely to live and go to school near where OPs are sprayed.

**Dozens of published scientific studies over more than two decades show that exposure to extremely low levels of OPs during early life can lead to irreversible harm to the developing brain**, which can result in long-term effects like attention disorders, autism, and reduced IQ. In 2015, the Environmental Protection Agency reviewed the evidence and confirmed the link between OPs and neurodevelopmental harm in a scientific literature review. This led the agency to retain the additional tenfold margin of safety established by the 1996 Food Quality Protection Act (the “FQPA 10X safety factor”), which is designed to account for the heightened susceptibility of children to pesticides when establishing pesticide tolerances and assessing risk. EPA also released preliminary human health risk assessments for all but one of the OPs over the past six years, which document serious risks that exceed EPA’s levels of concern (**some are 100 times higher**), which are the levels EPA associates with too much risk.

While EPA finally banned use of the OP chlorpyrifos in our food (after more than 15 years of advocacy and litigation), **the agency has failed to take action on any of the other OPs**, despite representing 2/3-3/4 of the estimated 16-28 million pounds of OPs sprayed annually according to the [most recent data](#) (the vast majority of which are used on food crops).

**The allowable levels of [OPs on food crops](#) from more than 15 years ago are unsafe; those levels are regularly violated; and many crops that aren’t allowed to have OPs on them have residues anyway.**

EPA has an October 1, 2022, statutory deadline to complete registration review of the OPs to ensure they are safe for use on food and there will be no unreasonable adverse effects on people and the environment. However, under the agency’s updated registration review schedule, released December 2, 2021, **the agency will meet this deadline for only three OPs and will miss the deadline by as long as 3 years for the other 15.**

**Congress must step in and act.**

**OP use on food must end. Every day that OPs continue to be allowed on these crops is another day that children and workers are needlessly poisoned.**