

COUNTY OF MORRIS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
MOSQUITO CONTROL DIVISION

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Malathion Fact Sheet

("Atrapa®" "Fyfanon®" "Microflo®")

What is malathion?

The above products all contain the pesticide malathion, a slightly toxic compound that is used in very small amounts to control adult mosquitoes. Malathion is not residual (does not last long) and is applied with specialized equipment in a manner that maximizes mosquito control but minimizes the impact on other organisms. The product is included in the insecticides recommended for adult mosquito control list produced by Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey.

How does malathion work?

Malathion disrupts the nervous system of target organisms. In mammals, the product is broken down quickly, while in insects it is broken down into other products that are fatal to them.

Is there danger to humans from this chemical?

Malathion is an organophosphate insecticide with very low toxicity for mammals. During mosquito control operations, the product is applied at ½ to 1 ounce per acre.

How is malathion applied?

Malathion is put out using Ultra Low Volume (ULV) equipment that produces droplets that are about 5 – 25 microns in size. There are 24,000 microns in an inch. In Morris County, we have found that the lowest application rate, ½ ounce per acre, is adequate for mosquito control. Malathion is broken down rapidly after application, and must contact flying mosquitoes directly to kill them.

Is malathion harmful to other insects?

Other insects may be harmed by malathion, so care must be taken to avoid beneficial insects, such as honeybees.

Malathion/2

How can I avoid exposure to malathion?

Exposure to malathion, even during spray operations, is minimal for the general public because of the small quantities used. There are, however, steps that can reduce this exposure even further:

- Note contact information regarding spraying in newspapers, published every 23 days during the mosquito season. Local municipalities may also be contacted, since spray activities are coordinated with them.
- Plan your activities to limit time spent outside during times of possible pesticide treatments (when mosquitoes are very high in number, and usually in the evening).
- Move your pets, their food, water dishes inside during a ULV application.
- Stay away from application equipment, whether in use or not.
- Whenever possible, remain indoors with windows closed and with window air conditioners on non-vent (closed to the outside air) and window fans turned off during spraying.
- Avoid direct contact with surfaces that are still wet from pesticide spraying. Do not allow children to play in areas that have been sprayed until they have completely dried (approximately one hour). Very little settling of a ULV spray takes place, however, so the chances of contacting malathion this way is minimal.
- If you must remain outdoors, avoid eye and skin contact with the spray. If you get spray in your eyes or on your skin, immediately flush and rinse with water.
- Move children's toys out of application areas.

What are symptoms of exposure to malathion?

Symptoms of exposure can include headache, nausea, dizziness, excessive sweating, salivation, excessive tearing and a runny nose. The chance of experiencing these symptoms of over-exposure with proper use is extremely low. You should contact your physician, other medical providers or the New Jersey Poison Information and Education System (NJPIES) at 1-800-222-1222 if you experience these symptoms following a pesticide spraying.

Where can I get more information on malathion?

For overall pesticide-specific information – 9:30am to 7:30pm:
National Pesticide Information Center: 800-858-7378

For pesticide health information & possible exposures – 24 hours:
New Jersey Poison Information & Education System: 800-222-1222

For New Jersey pesticide regulation & misuse complaints:
NJDEP Pesticide Control Program : 609-984-6507

For Federal insecticide regulation:
USEPA Region 2 Office of Pesticide Programs: 877-251-4575
Malathion/3

Where can I get more information about local mosquito control?
The Morris County Division of Mosquito Control: 973-285-6450 or www.morrismosquito.org

For state-wide mosquito control information:
NJDEP Office of Mosquito Control Coordination: 609-777-3666

Spraying for adult mosquitoes is a last resort. Most mosquito control work goes on “behind the scenes”, using water management, fish, and products to control immature mosquitoes in the water where they begin their life cycle. Controlling adult mosquitoes is more difficult because they are spread out and moving.

If you have questions about malathion or any other mosquito control related products or practices, please feel free to call the Morris County Division of Mosquito Control at (973) 285-6450, or visit our web site at www.morrismosquito.org