



## **“My child’s health” campaign begins mail-out on pesticide vote**

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The campaign postcard [3] highlights six major areas for concern for children’s health and protection.

- Pesticide exposure today may increase a child’s risk of developing a chronic disease or dysfunction later in life. [4]
- Evidence indicates that many pesticides are toxic to the brain of the developing child. Up to one in six children grows up with a developmental disability, in many cases affecting the nervous system, including learning disabilities, attention deficit disorders and mental retardation. [5]
- Several studies implicate pesticides in a range of conditions affecting children’s health, including cancer, non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma and leukaemia. [6]
- Father’s exposure to agricultural pesticides appears to increase the likelihood of kidney and brain cancer in the child. [6]
- Pesticide exposure during childhood may increase the risk of asthma, the leading cause of school absenteeism due to chronic illness. [7] [8]
- Very young children absorb more pesticides from what they eat than adults. [4]

So far, industry and farmers have been vocal in drawing attention to potential impacts of pesticide reform on their jobs and agricultural productivity. “What is missing from the picture is the health impact of current pesticide use in Europe,” says Monica Guarinoni, Policy Coordinator and Information Officer at the Health & Environment Alliance. “Making information available on the possible health consequences is important because citizens may not be willing to accept an increased risk of developing a chronic disease related to pesticide use.”

The Health & Environment Alliance’s postcard campaign aims to share the scientific evidence on the negative health impacts to children’s health and to highlight what the European Parliament can do immediately to reverse this trend.

“We are asking for a ban on using pesticides in and around areas where children eat, play and learn, something which is only common sense when looking at how they may be adversely affected, “ says Guarinoni.

HEAL would also like to see stricter criteria used when assessing whether a pesticide should be put on the market. For example, the assessment should address whether a pesticide has the potential to affect brain development or the immune system.

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**Notes for journalists**

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