

# DURSBAN

## What is Dursban?

Dursban (also marketed as Lorsban) is the brand name for an organophosphate pesticide (chlorpyrifos) that kills by attacking the nervous system.

Organophosphates were first developed by Nazi scientists as chemical warfare agents in the 1930s. Dow sells US \$500 million worth of Dursban every year worldwide. It is used for killing termites, cockroaches, ants, fleas and other insects.

## A Deadly Poison

Dursban is extremely dangerous:

- Dursban is a nerve toxin and suspected endocrine disruptor with the potential to alter and interfere with the hormonal systems of insects, wildlife, and people.
- Dursban causes neurological damage to children and can result in blurred vision, fatigue, muscle weakness, memory loss and depression.
- Dursban has been associated with carcinogenicity, reproductive and developmental toxicity, and acute toxicity.
- Dursban can cause multiple chemical sensitivity, neurobehavioral problems and peripheral neuropathy.
- Exposure to Dursban during the first trimester of pregnancy has been associated with birth defects.
- Dursban accounted for 7,000 accidental pesticide exposures reported to US Poison Control Centers in 1996 (the most recent year for which data is available).
- On June 8, 2000 the U.S Environmental Protection Agency recommended a ban on virtually all uses of Dursban in residential and commercial buildings in the U.S. The ban was based on the reported chronic effects of Dursban and especially effects on the brains of growing children.



## Dow & Dursban

Dow is the world's largest producer of Dursban (chlorpyrifos). As such, it has a vested interest in marketing the product as widely as possible – and in its attempts to show that the chemical was “safe” and hide its ill effects, Dow has engaged in many unethical acts.

- **Human testing.** In 1998, Dow tested Dursban on 60 paid recruits at a lab in Lincoln, Nebraska. Dow also fed Dursban to inmates at Clinton Correctional Institute, New York, in 1972 to assess its effects on humans.
- **Withholding poisoning information.** Dow was fined \$732,000 in August 1995 for

not sending the EPA its reports on 249 Dursban poisoning incidents.

- **Marketed as "safe"**. In 2003, Dow agreed to pay \$2 million - the largest penalty ever in a pesticide case - to the state of New York, in response to a lawsuit filed by the Attorney General to end Dow's illegal advertising of Dursban as "safe".
- **Misleading claims**. According to the NY Attorney General, as recently as March, 2003, Dow's internet site included the statement: "Consumer exposure from labelled use of chlorpyrifos products provides wide margins of safety for both adults and children." In contrast, Dow's safety data sheet for Durban TC™ (chlorpyrifos) states that "excessive vapour concentrations are attainable and could be hazardous on single exposure."

## Dursban in India

Dow produces and sells Dursban in India.

- In 1997 Dow began manufacturing Dursban at its new plant in Lote Parshuram.
- Since its June 2000 phase-out in the United States, Dow has aggressively marketed Dursban in India as a household chemical. Its sales literature falsely claims Dursban has "an established record of safety regarding humans and pets."
- 2003 tests conducted by Delhi NGO Centre for Science and Environment found chlorpyrifos residues in Indian Coca Cola and Pepsi Cola products at levels that exceed EU drinking water standards.

## What is Needed And Who Must Provide It

**WE DEMAND** that the central government stop the purchase of Dow products and any business associations between Dow and Indian public sector companies. Also, the central government must hold Dow's business expansion plans until it pays for the clean up of toxic contamination and compensation for the health and environmental damage caused due to reckless dumping of chemical wastes in Bhopal.

**This padyatra is our march for justice and dignity. We shall struggle until our last breath.  
21 years is enough!**

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## Dursban Timeline

**1930s** – Chlorpyrifos has its roots in Germany, when organophosphates were developed for Nazi use by I.G. Farben.  
**1965** – Dow begins selling Dursban.  
**1971** – Dow tests chlorpyrifos on inmates at Clinton Correctional Institute in New York State.  
**1994** – A survey finds that 82% of Americans have chlorpyrifos residues in their urine.  
**1995** – Dow is fined \$732,000 for not telling the EPA about 249 Dursban poisoning incidents.  
**1997** – Dow begins manufacturing Dursban in India at its new plant in Lote Parshuram.  
**1998** – Dow tests Dursban on 60 paid recruits at a lab in Lincoln, Nebraska.  
**2000** – The U.S Environmental Protection Agency recommends a ban on virtually all uses of Dursban in residential and commercial buildings in the U.S.  
**2003** – Dow pays \$2 million to settle a lawsuit by the New York Attorney General because of Dow's illegal advertising of Dursban as "safe".  
**2003** – Tests conducted by Delhi NGO Centre for Science and Environment find chlorpyrifos residues in Indian Coca Cola and Pepsi Cola products.  
**Now** – Dow continues to market Dursban in India and claims it has "an established record of safety regarding humans and pets."