

## Is Roundup Killing More than just Weeds?

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Roundup weed killer is an effective herbicide that is used in more than 130 countries worldwide, according to [original manufacturer Monsanto](#). It was first sold to the public in 1974 and [became the most-used agricultural product](#) of all time in 2016. Its active ingredient, glyphosate, was discovered in 1950 and has been patented for use as an antibiotic, a weed killer, commercial crop protectant, and is often used by hobbyist gardeners, professional landscapers, farmers, ranchers, and public groundskeepers. But this widely-used product that seems to do it all has many unintended side effects that are anything but desirable. In 2018, Monsanto was ordered to pay out \$289 million to a groundskeeper whose cancer was caused by his frequent use of Roundup. When Bayer AG acquired Monsanto, it inherited the legal woes associated with Roundup as well.

The main concern that consumers and medical professionals have with Roundup and other glyphosate-based products are that they are correlated with the onset of several types of cancer, including [non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and leukemia](#). Three now-famous lawsuits in California regarding Roundup's role in users' cancer have been settled. Monsanto and Bayer have been found guilty in all three. The third lawsuit was filed by plaintiffs Alberta and Alva Pilliod. Both husband and wife contracted terminal non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma after using Roundup on their property for decades. A jury awarded the Pilliods a total of more than \$2 billion USD in punitive damages. A fourth case has opened, and there are currently [nearly 14,000 more victims](#) waiting for their dates in court with Monsanto.

Another glaring issue concerning many consumers is the high concentration of glyphosate found in refined foods. Many crops test positive for glyphosate even after they have been harvested, refined, processed and cooked into food products that are in many American homes. This [includes cereal](#) and grain products, and even in many [brands of beer and wine](#). The hops in beer are often treated with Roundup when they are being grown, and many vineyards spray their grape trees with Roundup as well. Glyphosate has also been found in food from [many restaurants](#), including Panera Bread.

Furthermore, many scientists are worried about the chemical's potential to cause harm to the environment. Glyphosate can cause bacteria to develop a [resistance to antibiotics](#) 100 times faster than the bacteria naturally would, which could lead to a [global bacterial epidemic](#). Roundup can [contaminate water supplies](#) near areas where it has been sprayed, putting marine life, wild animals and human health at risk. The chemical is not water soluble, and it can lead to detectable glyphosate levels in cooked fish that will be eaten and in drinking water.

Use of Roundup weed killer has negatively affected many industries, including human health, nutrition, the environment, and water supplies near spraying grounds. This chemical cocktail has been known to be [a probable human carcinogen](#) since 1981, and Monsanto and Bayer's negligence has harmed tens of thousands of consumers. France and Ireland are working to ban the product nationwide, and many towns and counties in the United States have outlawed the use of the weed killer on a local level.

The health of the planet is jeopardized every time Roundup is sprayed. Advocating for organic farming can lessen glyphosate's impact on the agricultural industry and decrease airborne glyphosate pollution within several miles of each farm that sprays crops with glyphosate. Supporting clean water initiatives in your community or homeowners association can also lower your risk of being exposed to glyphosate-contaminated water. This benefits all people who drink reservoir or well water, and all fresh water marine life.

While more trials work to hold the corporations accountable for encouraging the use of this deadly product, there are many steps consumers can take to [protect themselves](#) from glyphosate exposure. This can be done by eating whole, unprocessed, organic foods, as those have not been sprayed with glyphosate. Supporting animal welfare programs in one's community can also ensure that pets, stray animals, livestock and farm animals are given food that was treated with Roundup. Another way to lessen the impact that glyphosate may have on your health and your environment is to choose certified organic consumer products such as cosmetics and toiletries. Protected and informed consumers are less likely to contract cancers from Roundup or ingest food that is contaminated with glyphosate.

*The [MAHB Blog](#) is a venture of the Millennium Alliance for Humanity and the Biosphere. Questions should be directed to [joan@mahbonline.org](mailto:joan@mahbonline.org)*