


# Backflow Prevention

## Guard Your Water



*A woman was using a hose attachment. After she finishes, she disconnects the applicator. It is a hot day, so she takes a refreshing drink of water from the hose. A short time later she is admitted to the emergency room with symptoms of poisoning.*

### What happened?

At some time while the woman was spraying weed killer, water pressure dropped, which resulted in the poison being sucked back into the hose. Later, when she drank from the hose, the poison inside was released with the water. She unknowingly poisoned herself.

**When** water flows backward through the water supply system, it is called backsiphonage or backflow. When that water is accidentally mixed with hazardous chemicals or bacteria, it is called dangerous!



Never submerge a hose.

The danger comes when the hose—any hose—is connected to a harmful substance. If the pressure in a water main drops while your hose is submerged in polluted or contaminated water, the water (and whatever is in it) could be sucked back into your pipes and your drinking water supply. Water pressure drops are not uncommon. They can happen when firefighters battle a nearby blaze or before a city crew repairs a broken water main.

Some harmful substances you should be wary of are the chemicals used to fertilize your grass or the weed killer used on your lawn. The cleanser used on your kitchen sink could be hazardous if swallowed, as could the bacteria in the water from your wading pool or waterbed.

Fortunately, keeping your water safe from these contaminants is easy. Take the following precautions to protect your drinking water.

NEVER	submerge hoses in buckets, pools, tubs, or sinks.
ALWAYS	keep the end of the hose clear of possible contaminants.
DO NOT	use spray attachments without a backflow prevention device. The chemicals used on your lawn are toxic and can be fatal if ingested.
DO	buy and install inexpensive backflow prevention for all threaded faucets around your home. They are available at hardware stores and home-improvement centers.

