



Glyphosate – History, Research, Safety and News

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Glyphosate background and recent news: Glyphosate was discovered in 1950 by a Swiss pharmaceutical company but had no pharmaceutical properties and was not further pursued for human health purposes. It was 'rediscovered' and introduced in the U.S. agricultural market in 1974 as a non-selective herbicide with a new mode of action. Because glyphosate will control broadleaf and grassy weeds, it has been used as an integral part of landscape weed control for over 40 years.

What is the recent controversy about glyphosate? Recently, a California jury awarded \$268 million in damages to a plaintiff who claimed that his cancer was caused by glyphosate. This lawsuit is based solely on the opinion of one organization called IARC (International Agency for Research on Cancer, a branch of the World Health Organization). IARC is not a regulatory authority and did no independent studies. IARC is the same organization that determined beer, meat, cell phones, and coffee cause cancer. Investigative reports by [Reuters](#) and the [Times of London](#) have uncovered that IARC members reviewing glyphosate concealed important scientific data, edited out the conclusions of key studies, and were closely aligned with U.S. trial lawyers.

Who is the World Health Organization (WHO)? WHO is a European organization with **NO** regulatory oversight, or jurisdiction in the U.S. or Europe. Unlike the U.S. EPA and the European Food Safety Agency (EFSA), WHO is **not** responsible for testing and regulating pesticides for human safety. WHO's use of science has been called into question by many regulatory and scientific groups including the U.S. EPA and the EFSA. It is unclear if WHO even conducts toxicology or field trials. Instead, they are known to purposely disregard the total weight of available evidence, manipulating and misinterpreting data and publishing sensationalist reports.

Research, testing and findings: The National Institutes of Health (NIH) recently reaffirmed glyphosate does not cause cancer. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other regulatory authorities in Europe, Canada, Japan, Australia, Korea, and elsewhere routinely review all approved pesticide products and have consistently reaffirmed that glyphosate does not cause cancer.

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In September of 2016 the U.S. EPA for the **3rd time** listed glyphosate as a Group 5 (not likely) carcinogenic substance. This year, glyphosate underwent a U.S. EPA registration review. By law, this occurs for all pesticides on a 15-year cycle. The results of the re-registration process will be released in 2019. It should be obvious the U.S. EPA takes pesticide safety to humans and the environment seriously and is not capricious with their results or rulings. Prior to the U.S. EPA listing glyphosate as a Group 5 substance, in 2015 the EFSA “found no grounds to classify glyphosate for carcinogenicity”.

Is there current research on the subject? Yes, there is. In November 2017 a study was published in the Journal of National Cancer Institute that reviewed the use of glyphosate for 44,932 licensed applicators and users of glyphosate in North Carolina and Iowa. Of the applicators there were 5,779 incidents of cancer, not different from the national average of the population. The authors concluded there was no apparent association “between glyphosate and any solid tumors or lymphoid malignancies overall, including non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and its subtypes”.

Does this mean it is safe to use glyphosate? “Safe” is a relative term. All pesticides should be respected and used according to the label. They have been thoroughly tested and reviewed by respectable regulatory agencies (e.g. U.S. EPA and EFSA) for human toxicity and environmental impact. If used correctly, the evidence is that glyphosate is “not likely” to cause issues. This recent article from [Bloomberg](#) provides important context and perspective.

Sources:

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