

Get Covered!

Mulching Instructions



Are you ready to Get Covered?

Arsenic and lead levels in your soil can increase your risk for health problems. Long-term, daily exposure by accidentally swallowing or breathing in soil increases your risks.

One of the best ways to reduce risks is to Get Covered! Create a physical barrier between contaminated soil and your family. You can do this in six easy steps (see reverse). Use mulch or rubber mats around play structures or keep a good grass cover in areas where kids play.

What is mulch?

Mulch is any material you apply to the surface of the soil – wood chips, bark, fabric weed barriers, gravel, rock, rubber mats, and even grass clippings! To cover areas of bare dirt where children play in your yard, we focus on wood playground chips, bark and rubber mats.

What should I use?

Wood playground chips are splinter-free and might be your best choice. They work great for larger areas around play structures and look nice in planting beds where kids

like to dig. It's best to lay down landscaping fabric first and attach it with landscaping staples. Then spread four to six inches of wood playground chips on top.

Bark is a great option around plants. It helps with weed control and moisture retention. This type of mulch works well in play areas if your kids keep their shoes on! Apply bark on top of a layer of landscaping fabric.

Instead of purchasing bark, you may be able to get arborist chips for free. Contact a local tree service to find out. Arborist chips may have larger pieces of wood mixed in, and splinters are likely, so they are best for planting beds and not around play structures.

Consider a **rubber mat** if you have bare patches of soil at the base of a slide or under swings. Save yourself the effort of frequently replacing mulch. You can purchase playground specific mats on-line or use a heavy rubber doormat from your local hardware store.



How much do I need?

To help you **calculate** how much mulch you'll need, use an on-line calculator like the one at www.landscapecalculator.com/calculators/mulch. Or use about a cubic yard for every 50 to 60 square feet you need to cover.





Step one

Calculate how much mulch you will need to cover bare patches where kids play in your yard. Buy a little extra to have on hand when it is time to cover up again.



Step two

Transport in bulk or buy in bags from your local supplier. If you don't have access to a truck, you can arrange for delivery.



Step three

Cover bare patches with 4-6 inches of mulch. For extra protection, put landscape fabric down first. Don't use plastic.



Step four

Spread mulch with a rake or gloves to cover bare patches.



Step five

Protect plants from disease. Keep mulch 1-2" from tree trunks and other plants.

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Step six

Repeat if you see exposed ground.