

Frequently Asked Questions about Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFASs)

PFASs are a large group of synthetic chemicals that are used in industrial processes and to make products resistant to oils, water, and heat. They have also been used in fire-fighting foams. These chemicals are often referred to as “forever chemicals” and have spread throughout the environment. They are also known to contaminate some food and water sources.

Where are PFASs found?



- Food and drinking water, such as some:
 - Meat, seafood, milk, and eggs, because some PFASs in the environment can accumulate in animals.
 - Vegetables, fruits, and grains grown with pesticides or water that contains PFASs.
 - Food in certain grease-repellent packaging, including some fast-food wrappers, microwave popcorn bags, take-out boxes, and cardboard containers for frozen foods. Use of PFASs in food packaging is being phased out in the United States.
 - Drinking water affected by nearby PFAS sources, such as some landfills, airports, and industrial facilities.
- Consumer products, including some:
 - Textiles, such as stain-resistant carpets, water-repellent outdoor fabrics, and leather.
 - Stain- and water-repellent sprays; sealants for granite and other natural stone tiles or countertops; cleaning products; lubricants; polishes; and waxes.
 - Personal care products, such as some skin creams, eye makeup, and dental floss.
 - Nonstick cookware.

What are possible health concerns?

Some PFASs:

- Can affect the immune system and liver function.
- Can increase cancer risk.
- May harm the fetus and child, including effects on growth and development.
- May increase the risk of thyroid disease.
- May interfere with the body’s natural hormones.

What are possible ways to reduce exposure?

- Include plenty of variety in your and your child’s diet, and limit how often you eat foods in grease-repellent wrappers and containers.
- If you learn that there are PFASs in your drinking water, consider using a water filter certified to remove or reduce PFASs. For more information on water filters, see the links below.



- Avoid choosing products labeled as stain- or water-resistant, such as carpets, furniture, and clothing.
- Check labels of household and personal care products and avoid those with ingredients such as “fluoro”, “C4”, “C8”, etc. Contact the manufacturer if you can’t find a list of ingredients on the label.
- If you use stain- and water-repellent sprays, sealants, polishes, waxes, or similar products, make sure the area you are working in is well-ventilated and follow all safety precautions.
- Because PFASs can come out of products and collect in dust:
 - Wash your and your child’s hands often, especially before preparing or eating food.
 - Clean floors regularly, using a wet mop or HEPA vacuum if possible, and use a damp cloth to dust.

For more information:

Reducing PFAS in Your Drinking Water with a Home Filter: <https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-04/water-filter-fact-sheet.pdf>

Q&A: PFAS National Primary Drinking Water Regulation: https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-04/pfas-npdwr_qa_general_4.9.24v1.pdf

California State Water Board PFAS Information: <https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/pfas/>

Questions and Answers on PFAS in Food: <https://www.fda.gov/food/process-contaminants-food/questions-and-answers-pfas-food>

Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) and Your Health: <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/index.html>

PFAS Explained: <https://www.epa.gov/pfas/pfas-explained>