



Frequently Asked Questions

PER- AND POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES (PFAS)

Perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a large group of man-made chemicals that have been found in various consumer products, industrial processes, drinking water systems, and other known areas across the United States. **You can limit exposure and reduce potential health effects by avoiding products that contain PFAS.**

What are PFAS?

PFAS have been used in industry and a variety of consumer products since the 1950s due to their exceptional resistance to heat, water, and oil. The most widely produced and studied of these chemicals are perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS). Known as “forever” chemicals, PFAS are very persistent in the environment and in the human body – meaning they don’t break down and they can accumulate over time.

How can I be exposed to PFAS?

The main ways people come into contact with PFAS are:

- Eating fish caught in water contaminated by PFAS.
- Drinking water contaminated with PFAS.
- Breathing in dust contaminated with PFAS, especially in workplace settings.



Other common sources of exposure include:

- Non-stick cookware
- Grease-proof food packaging (e.g., pizza boxes, fast food wrappers, popcorn bags)
- Stain-resistant carpets and upholstery
- Cosmetics
- Coated dental floss
- Water-resistant clothing and accessories
- Paints, varnishes, and sealants
- Cleaning products that contain perfluorinated or polyfluorinated ingredients (e.g., some brands of dishwashing detergents, laundry detergents, floor waxes and polishes)
- Firefighting foam

How can PFAS affect my health?

Scientists are still learning about the health effects PFAS can have on the body. Research suggests that high concentrations of PFOA and PFOS may:

- Increase cholesterol levels
- Suppress immune function
- Affect growth, learning, and behavior in infants and children
- Increase the risk of high blood pressure or pre-eclampsia in pregnant women
- Interfere with the body’s natural hormones
- Decrease fertility in women
- Increase the risk of certain cancers

How can I reduce my exposure to PFAS?

You can reduce your exposure to PFAS by following these simple tips:

- Use safer cookware such as stainless steel, cast iron, or glass.
- Avoid products that repel stains, water, and oil.
- If your drinking water contains PFAS, use an alternative or treated water source for drinking, preparing food, cooking, brushing teeth, and preparing infant formula.
- Read consumer product labels and avoid using products with PFAS.
- Follow fish advisories to avoid or limit eating fish from PFAS contaminated bodies of water <https://epd.georgia.gov/watershed-protection-branch>.

There is no current treatment to remove PFAS from the body. Reducing exposures is the most important step you can take to protect yourself and your family.



Although PFAS can be measured in the blood, blood testing for diagnosis is not recommended because the results do not help doctors make medical decisions or predict future health effects.

What types of water filters remove PFAS?

Point-of-Use Filters (under the sink or counter-top)

- Dual-stage granular activated carbon (GAC)
- Dual-stage KDF/GAC
- Reverse osmosis

Point-of-Entry Filters (whole house)

- Two or Three-stage KDF/GAC
- Reverse osmosis

When purchasing home water treatment to address PFAS, look for products certified to NSF/ANSI 53 (for filters) or NSF/ANSI 58 (reverse osmosis).

Resources

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

<https://www.epa.gov/pfas>

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

<https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/>

Environmental Working Group

<https://www.ewg.org>

For More Information

Georgia Department of Public Health

Environmental Health Section

Chemical Hazards Program

(404) 657-6534

www.dph.georgia.gov/chemical-hazards

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We protect lives.