

# Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What are PFAS?

Perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a large group of man-made chemicals that have been used in industry and consumer products worldwide since the 1950s.

- PFAS do not occur naturally, but are widespread in the environment.
- PFAS are found in people, wildlife and fish all over the world.
- Some PFAS can stay in people's bodies a long time.
- Some PFAS do not break down easily in the environment.



### How can I be exposed to PFAS?

PFAS contamination may be in drinking water, food, indoor dust, some consumer products, and workplaces. Most non worker exposures occur through drinking contaminated water or eating food that contains PFAS.

Although some types of PFAS are no longer used, some products may still contain PFAS:

- Food packaging materials
- Nonstick cookware
- Stain resistant carpet treatments
- Water resistant clothing
- Cleaning products
- Paints, varnishes and sealants
- Firefighting foam
- Some cosmetics



### How can I reduce my exposure to PFAS?

PFAS are present at low levels in some food products and in the environment (air, water, soil etc.), so you probably cannot prevent PFAS exposure altogether. However, if you live near known sources of PFAS contamination, you can take steps to reduce your risk of exposure.

- If your drinking water contains PFAS above the EPA Lifetime Health Advisory, consider using an alternative or treated water source for any activity in which you might swallow water:
  - » drinking
  - » food preparation
  - » cooking
  - » brushing teeth, and
  - » preparing infant formula
- Check for fish advisories for water bodies where you fish.
  - » Follow fish advisories that tell people to stop or limit eating fish from waters contaminated with PFAS or other compounds.
  - » Research has shown the benefits of eating fish, so continue to eat fish from safe sources as part of your healthy diet.
- Read consumer product labels and avoid using those with PFAS.

