



Pictured above: a polyfluoroalkyl substance, or PFAS, molecule

How does PFAS affect the body after exposure?



In pregnancy, PFAS exposure may affect baby growth and birth weight

Continued exposure of PFAS has an increased risk of cardiovascular diseases²



Some PFAS have been linked to prostate, kidney and testicular cancer³

Reduced vaccine response⁴



Evidence may indicate developmental delays⁵

What is PFAS and how can you avoid it in your daily life?

PFAS, or polyfluoroalkyl substances, are called “forever chemicals” because they don’t break down easily in the environment or in our bodies. This means they can build up over time, which is a problem because some PFAS have been linked to health risks like cancer, hormone problems, and immune system issues.

Scientists, governments, and environmental nonprofits like FLOW, are working to find safer alternatives and clean up areas where PFAS have polluted water and soil.

PFAS is most commonly found in fast food to-go containers, contaminated and bottled water, non-stick cookware, firefighting foam and stain-resistant carpet and fabric.



packaging/
wrappers



water



non-stick cookware



firefighting foam



stain-resistant
carpet & fabric

To mitigate your risk, follow these FLOW-recommendations:

REDUCE EXPOSURE THROUGH WATER

- **Test Your Water:** PFAS can [contaminate drinking water](#) in private wells, especially near industrial sites or firefighting training areas such as airports.⁶ Test your home’s water using a PFAS-specific water testing kit or consult local water quality reports.
- **Use Water Filters:** Install a [water filtration system](#) certified to remove PFAS. Reverse osmosis systems or activated carbon filters designed for PFAS removal are effective options.⁷
- **Avoid Bottled Water:** Some [bottled water brands](#) may contain PFAS unless explicitly stated otherwise.⁸

PRACTICE SAFE FOOD HANDLING:

- **Reduce High-Risk Foods:** Fish and wildlife from contaminated areas may have higher PFAS levels. Check advisories in your region.
- **Limit Processed Foods:** PFAS can migrate from packaging into processed or takeout foods.



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MINIMIZE CONTACT WITH CONTAMINATED PRODUCTS:

- **Avoid Nonstick Cookware:** [Replace nonstick pans](#) (e.g., Teflon-coated) with stainless steel, cast iron, or ceramic alternatives.⁹
- **Check Food Packaging:** Limit the use of items like grease-resistant food wrappers, microwave popcorn bags, and fast-food packaging that may contain PFAS.
- **Select Personal Care Products Wisely:** Choose PFAS-free cosmetics, dental floss, and other personal care items by checking ingredient labels or using resources like the Environmental Working Group's (EWG) [Skin Deep](#) database.¹⁰

BE CAUTIOUS WITH STAIN-RESISTANT AND WATERPROOF FABRICS:

- **Avoid Stain-Resistant Treatments:** Say no to optional [stain- and water-resistant treatments](#) for carpets, furniture, and clothing.¹¹
- **Check Outdoor Gear:** Look for PFAS-free alternatives when purchasing water-resistant jackets, tents, and gear.

EDUCATE YOURSELF AND OTHERS:

- **Learn about PFAS risks** and spread awareness to friends, family, and your community.
- **Participate in community discussions** about PFAS contamination and cleanup efforts.

ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE:

- **Support Regulation:** Stay informed and advocate for stronger regulations on PFAS in consumer goods and the environment.
- **Stay Updated:** Follow public health advisories about PFAS-contaminated areas, [fish and game](#), or products.¹²

1-5; Our Current Understanding of the Human Health and Environmental Risks of PFAS; EPA. Available at: <https://www.epa.gov/pfas/our-current-understanding-human-health-and-environmental-risks-pfas>; **6, 7, 12:** FAQ: Pfas State of Michigan.. <https://www.michigan.gov/pfasresponse>; **8:** Chow, S. (2021, May 27). Detection of ultrashort-chain and other per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in U.S. Bottled Water. Water Research. https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0043135421004905?dgcid=rss_sd_all; **9:** Guardian News and Media. (2025, February 28). Want to avoid Forever Chemicals? here are nine of the best pfas-free frying pans. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/thefilter/2025/feb/28/best-pfas-free-frying-pans>; **10:** EWG skin deep® cosmetics database <http://www.ewg.org/skindeep/>; **11:** Bugos, C. (2022, February 3). Study finds toxic "forever chemicals" in most stain- and water-resistant textiles. Verywell Health. <https://www.verywell-health.com/pfas-water-stain-resistant-products-5217827>