

PFAS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE: What you need to know

Per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances are a group of human-made chemicals (of which there are thousands) **known as PFAS**. These chemicals were developed in the 1940s to repel water or make a surface slippery. Since then, PFAS have been adapted for many consumer products and are now common drinking water contaminants throughout the United States.

HOW ARE WE EXPOSED TO PFAS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE?



Water & Diet

Over many years, PFAS have been discharged to fresh water and ocean water, which contaminates drinking water for people and results in PFAS contamination in fish. Food packaging, such as microwave popcorn bags, also contains PFAS, leading to food contamination.



Air

PFAS outdoor air concentrations are found to be highest near industrial facilities that discharge PFAS emissions. These emissions are transported by wind and deposited in soil and in oceans, lakes, rivers and streams.



Soil

PFAS make their way into soil due to discharge from industry, deposits from the air, leaching from a landfill or sludge from wastewater treatment plants placed on the land. PFAS in soil then enter the water.



Consumer & Industry Products

PFAS are used in industrial processes and are incorporated into many water, stain and grease-resistant products, including clothing, carpet, furniture, non-stick cookware, food packaging, takeout containers, personal care products and ski waxes. PFAS have also been used historically in firefighting foam.



HOW DOES PFAS REACH PEOPLE IN NH?



Industry



Environment



Consumer & Industry Products



Human Exposure



Waste Management

WHO IS AT RISK FROM PFAS EXPOSURE?

EVERYONE! BUT IN PARTICULAR:



Residents living near areas with higher levels of PFAS in the water, air and soil



Anyone drinking water from contaminated water sources including **private wells**



Pregnant women, babies and children who are especially sensitive to PFAS



People who regularly use or produce products containing PFAS



People who eat certain packaged foods or fish that contain PFAS



PFAS interfere with:

- the body's hormones
- the ability to fight infection
- growth and development in children

PFAS increase risk of:

- high cholesterol
- thyroid disorders
- certain types of cancer



PFAS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE: What you need to know



WHY ARE WE CONCERNED ABOUT PFAS?

- PFAS are in humans and wildlife around the world and stay in our bodies for years. PFAS do not degrade in the environment and are found in some of the [food, water and consumer products](#) we use every day.
- Our state has several areas impacted by PFAS, including groundwater contamination at Pease Air Force Base in Portsmouth and water and soil contamination, and air emissions from industrial facilities in southern New Hampshire (NH). [Follow this link](#) to see if the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) has detected PFAS in water in your community.



HOW CAN YOU REDUCE YOUR FAMILY'S PFAS EXPOSURE?

- **Check** with your public water supplier for PFAS levels. Homeowners with private wells are solely responsible for testing and treating their water. The only way for private well users to know if you have PFAS in your water is to **TEST IT**. See recommended water tests for NH private wells [here](#).
- **Consider** [in-home water filtration options](#).
- **Use a wet mop** instead of sweeping with a broom to reduce exposure to dust, which can harbor PFAS and other toxic chemicals.
- **Check out** [consumer product information](#) from Environmental Working Group to avoid PFAS in common products like cookware, rain jackets, makeup, and certain types of dental floss.
- **Visit** [PFAS Central](#) for a list of PFAS-Free products.
- **Avoid** eating foods packaged in material containing PFAS, such as microwave popcorn and fast-food.
- **Avoid** stain resistant coatings on carpets, furniture and other upholstery.

Questions? Email: PFAS.questions@dartmouth.edu



This project is supported by the National Institutes of Health Grant number P42ES007373 from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, or the National Institutes of Health.
Fact sheet Last Updated: May 2021



WHAT IS ALREADY BEING DONE ABOUT PFAS?

• Communities are taking action:

[Merrimack Citizens for Clean Water](#), was formed in 2016 when NHDES ordered the closing of two of the six Merrimack, NH public water wells as they tested over the state regulatory limit for PFAS at that time.

[Testing for Pease](#) is a community action group founded in 2015 in response to PFAS contamination at the Pease Tradeport.

- **Protective PFAS Regulations are in place in New Hampshire**
- **State and federal legislators are working to pass additional protective policies**
- **Research is ongoing to better understand the effects of PFAS on human health and wildlife**

[Click Here for an FAQ with more information!](#)



WHERE CAN YOU FIND MORE INFORMATION?

- [NH Department of Health and Human Services \(NHDHHS\)](#)
- [NH Department of Environmental Services PFAS Investigation](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry \(ATSDR\) PFAS](#)
- [ATSDR Community Stress Resource Center](#)
- [NHDHHS PFAS Blood Testing](#)
- [Silent Spring Institute's PFAS Exchange](#)

[Click Here for an FAQ with more information!](#)

