# PFAS
*Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances*

ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

## About PFAS

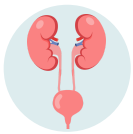
PFAS are a group of man-made chemicals used in industry and consumer products because of their resistance to heat, water, and stains. PFAS are hard to break down and stick around in the environment for a very long time.

There are nearly 15,000 types of PFAS. Some examples are:

- Perfluorooacatanoic acid (PFOA)
- Perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS)
- Perfluorobutane sulfonic acid (PFBS)
- Perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA)
- Perfluorohexane sulfonic acid (PFHxS)
- GenX chemicals (HFPO-DA)

## Health effects of PFAS

Scientists are still learning about the health effects of different PFAS. Studies show exposure to certain PFAS can lead to the following:


Higher risk of kidney & testicular cancer


High blood pressure in pregnant women


Higher cholesterol levels


Impacts on child growth, learning, and behavior


Lower immune response


Lower infant birth weight

**Health effects from PFAS can differ** based on factors like how much PFAS you were exposed to, how long you were exposed for, and individual sensitivity. Talk with your doctor if you have concerns about your health.

## Common sources of PFAS


Drinking water


Nonstick cookware


Food grown or raised near PFAS


Food packaging


Water & stain resistant products


Firefighting foam

## PFAS regulations

In 2024, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) established legally enforceable levels, called Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs), for six PFAS in drinking water.

For more information about how PFAS are tested and regulated in Arizona, visit the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality at azdeq.gov/pfas_dw.

| Chemical | MCL (enforceable level) |
|---|---|
| PFOA or PFOS | 4.0 parts per trillion (ppt) |
| PFHxS, PFNA, or HFPO-DA (GenX) | 10 ppt |
| Mixtures containing two or more of PFHxS, PFNA, HFPO-DA, and PFBS | 1 Hazard Index (HI) |

Note: Private well owners are responsible for testing and maintaining their well(s). Learn more at azdhs.gov/wellwater.

## Reduce your exposure to PFAS

You can reduce your exposure by avoiding products containing PFAS and making sure your drinking water is safe. If your water has PFAS above the MCL, avoid using it for certain activities.

### You can still use your water to:

Wash Dishes

Swim

Irrigate land

Do laundry

Bathe

Shower

### Why?

PFAS absorption through skin is minimal, so these activities pose little risk. However, watch kids carefully if you think they may swallow water in the bath or while swimming.

### Avoid using your water to:

Drink

Prepare formula

Cook

Wash produce

Brush teeth

Make tea or coffee

### Why?

More PFAS can get into your body when you swallow them. So, avoid using water with levels above the MCL for activities where you swallow or may swallow water.

## Filter your water

Some home water filter systems can decrease PFAS. Follow these three steps when choosing and using a filter to remove PFAS from your water:

### 1 Choose the right type of filter

**Boiling your water will NOT remove PFAS.** The EPA recommends granulated carbon filters, reverse osmosis systems, or ion exchange resins to remove PFAS from drinking water.

### 2 Check if the filter is certified to remove PFAS

Certification standards do not yet mean that a filter will remove PFAS to levels below the MCL. But, new standards are in progress and reducing PFAS in your water is still an effective way to limit your exposure. To check for certification:

- Look on product labels or the manufacturer's website for certification under **NSF/ANSI 53 or NSF/ANSI 58 for PFAS reduction**. This means the filter has proven to reduce PFAS to below 20 ppt.
- Check the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) website to see if a product treats the type(s) of PFAS you're trying to remove.

### 3 Maintain your filter properly

Be mindful of the expiration date and follow the manufacturer's instructions. A working filter means safer drinking water!

## Should I drink bottled water instead?

Deciding whether to drink bottled water is a personal choice. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulates bottled water and has not yet set PFAS standards.

Before buying bottled water, you should check whether it has been tested for PFAS. Many bottled water producers test and report their results. The International Bottled Water Association (IBWA) also requires its members test for PFAS in all products they sell.

Note: Not all companies are members of the IBWA. You can check at bottledwater.org.

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