



Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)

Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances, or PFAS, are a family of chemicals used to make products that resist water, heat, oil, stains, and grease. They are commonly found in many common items:

- **Waterproofing** for jackets, boots, waders, and pants;
- **Food packaging** like pizza boxes, take-away boxes, and popcorn bags;
- **Personal care products** including shampoos, dental floss, and cosmetics;
- **Non-stick cookware**;
- **Auto and floor waxes**;
- **Industrial products** like firefighting foam.

Health Effects of PFAS Exposure

Health effects from exposure to PFAS compounds can include:

- Kidney and testicular cancer
- Increased blood pressure and preeclampsia in pregnant women
- Increased cholesterol levels
- Lowered vaccine response
- And others

Scientists are still learning more about how PFAS affect human health. Children often have a higher exposure to PFAS because they may chew on toys and often put their hands in their mouths.

Scientists are still learning more about how PFAS affect human health.

Because these chemicals don't easily break down in the environment or humans, they are widely referred to as "forever chemicals." Not only are the chemicals persistent, but they are widespread having been used for decades, seeping into our water, air, and soil. [This resource](#) from the CDC Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry explains how humans can be exposed to common PFAS compounds.

How can you reduce your exposure to PFAS?

There are a number of things you can do to reduce your exposure to PFAS chemicals:

- Purchase PFAS-free rain gear
- Replace non-stick cookware with options like cast iron or carbon steel
- Transfer food out of packaging as soon as possible and avoid heating food in takeout containers.
- Avoid purchasing products with water- or stain-resistant properties, as these often contain PFAS.
- Purchase furniture and carpets from retailers that [restrict the use of PFAS](#).
- When purchasing cosmetics, avoid products that are water-resistant or contain PTFE or “fluoro-” in the ingredients list.
- Ensure children wash their hands after playing on the floor and before eating.
- Consider a [water treatment device](#) if your water source is known to contain PFAS*.

*It is considered low risk to shower, bathe, and wash dishes in water containing PFAS, as only a small amount of these chemicals can get into your body through your skin.

Additional Resources

Oregon Association of Clean Water Agencies has produced [several useful resources about PFAS](#):

[PFAS Resources Page](#)

[PFAS: What You Can Do](#)

[Understanding PFAS Exposures](#)

References

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. “How PFAS Impacts Your Health.” Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. Accessed September 30, 2026. <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/about/health-effects.html>

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. “PFAS and Your Health.” Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. Accessed September 30, 2026. https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/about/?CDC_AA_refVal=

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. “How to Prevent PFAS Exposure.” Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. Accessed September 30, 2026. <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/prevent-exposure/index.html>

Loria, Kevin. “How to Avoid PFAS.” Consumer Reports. May 5, 2022. Accessed September 30, 2026. <https://www.epa.gov/pfas/meaningful-and-achievable-steps-you-can-take-reduce-your-risk>

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. “Meaningful and Achievable Steps You Can Take to Reduce Your Risk.” Accessed September 30, 2026. <https://www.consumerreports.org/toxic-chemicals-substances/how-to-avoid-pfas-a8582109888/>