



PFAS in Drinking Water

Perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are manmade chemicals used for stain resistance and waterproofing consumer products such as carpets, clothing, and food packaging. PFAS are also used in firefighting foam and industrial applications. PFAS persist in the environment and can contaminate surface waters and groundwater near sites where they were manufactured or used.

HOW CAN PFAS AFFECT MY HEALTH?

Most of what is known about PFAS comes from studies of humans and animals exposed to perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS). PFOA and PFOS are no longer produced in the United States, but they continue to be detected in human blood, along with other PFAS. Exposure to PFAS in contaminated drinking water may result in the following health effects:

- Increased cholesterol levels
- Liver damage
- Increased risk for thyroid disease
- High blood pressure or pre-eclampsia during pregnancy
- Small decreases in infant birth weights
- Decreased vaccine response in children
- Increased risk of cancers

A blood test can determine if you have been exposed to PFAS, but the results cannot tell you if your exposures will make you sick now or in the future. If you have health concerns about exposure to PFAS in your drinking water, consult your doctor.

IS THERE AN ACCEPTABLE LEVEL OF PFAS IN MY WATER?

In 2025, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) adopted health-based groundwater quality standards for six PFAS, including PFOA, PFOS, hexafluoropropylene oxide dimer acid (HFPO-DA), perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA), perfluorobutane sulfonic acid (PFBS), and perfluorohexane sulfonic acid (PFHxS). The standards are provided below in parts per trillion (ppt). You may have an increased risk of PFAS-related health effects when the level of PFAS in your drinking water exceeds the standards.

PFOA	PFOS	HFPO-DA ¹	PFNA	PFBS	PFHxS
4 ppt	4 ppt	10 ppt	10 ppt	2,000 ppt	10 ppt

¹ HFPO-DA and its ammonium salt are also known as "GenX chemicals."

CAN MY WATER BE TESTED FOR PFAS?

In 2021, IEPA tested Illinois community water supplies to determine the prevalence and magnitude of PFAS in drinking water. Private wells were not part of this effort; however, nearby community water supply test results may indicate a potential risk of private well contamination. Community water supply test results can be found on IEPA's [Drinking Water Watch](#) or [PFAS Interactive Dashboard and Map](#) websites.

If you live near a community where PFAS have been detected or near a site where PFAS may have been released, you should consider testing your private well. You may contact the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) for assistance in conducting your own testing through a private laboratory. IDPH can also provide a health interpretation of your results and provide treatment recommendations.

CAN PFAS BE REMOVED FROM MY DRINKING WATER?

PFAS can be removed from drinking water with in-home treatment technologies, such as carbon filtration and reverse osmosis. Treatment can be installed at the point of use, such as your kitchen faucet or refrigerator, or at the point of entry to your home. Carbon filters are also available with filtered water pitchers. Treatment may not always reduce PFAS below levels of concern because the effectiveness of treatment is based on the amount of PFAS contamination and continued maintenance of the treatment system. To maximize the effectiveness of PFAS removal, IDPH recommends installing treatment systems certified by the National Sanitation Foundation (<http://info.nsf.org/Certified/DWTU/>) and following the manufacturer's maintenance instructions.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

Illinois Department of Public Health
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TTY (hearing impaired use only) 800-547-0466

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[Illinois Environmental Protection Agency](#)

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