



THINKING ABOUT PFAS IN DRINKING WATER

The United States has some of the safest public water supplies in the world. Our drinking water is treated and monitored to ensure that the water being delivered is safe for consumption. While our water is safe, drinking water quality and management is understandably complicated. Small traces of naturally occurring or man-made substances can sometimes find their way into tap water. One such substance is a group of compounds called per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS.

? WHAT ARE PFAS?

PFAS are man-made compounds that resist heat, oil, and water, which make them extremely useful for a wide variety of products, including non-stick coating, textiles, and fire-fighting foam. They are very stable in the environment, and once they make their way into water, they can be found in plants and animals used for human consumption.

📍 WHERE DO PFAS IN DRINKING WATER COME FROM?

PFAS in drinking water typically originate from facilities where these products were produced or used, like manufacturing facilities or air bases. PFAS were used widely in the United States until the early 2000s, but manufacturers are beginning to phase out certain PFAS. However, legacy PFAS don't degrade easily, so they are still present in many places.

! WHY ARE PFAS IN DRINKING WATER A CONCERN?

In animal studies, some PFAS, such as perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), were found to be toxic to the liver and immune, endocrine, and reproductive systems. Human studies, like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey and the C8 Health Study, showed consistent correlations between PFOA and elevated cholesterol and obesity, some cancers, and immune suppression. The water sector is actively researching potential health impacts from PFAS, and studying the best ways to remove them from the water cycle.

🔍 WHAT SOLUTIONS EXIST FOR PFAS?

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has developed a health advisory for two specific PFAS, which includes clear guidance for monitoring these PFAS. The water sector is regularly monitoring for them in our finished water and investigating the source of the PFAS found in our watershed. We have also invested in research that will evaluate treatment methods like granular activated carbon, ion exchange, and high-pressure membranes to remove PFAS from drinking water.

You can reduce your exposure to PFAS by installing at-home reverse osmosis treatment or carbon filters, which are effective when they are correctly operated and maintained.

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