



MASSACHUSETTS BREAST CANCER COALITION



PFAS – Reducing Your Exposure



PFAS Health Risks

PFAS, a class of highly fluorinated chemicals, have been linked to a wide range of health effects including immune system toxicity, elevated cholesterol, altered mammary gland development, effects on the thyroid and liver, and cancers. Scientists are concerned that exposures to chemicals that alter mammary gland development may increase the risk of breast cancer later in life.

With over 9,000 compounds, PFAS pose an enormous public health challenge. This class of toxic chemicals is used in many consumer products such as stain-resistant carpets, non-stick pans, waterproof jackets, cosmetics, and grease-proof food packaging. PFAS have strong chemical bonds and unique structures that make them extremely persistent, meaning they don't break down in the environment. Some PFAS can linger in our bodies for many years. Nearly all Americans carry traces of these chemicals in our bodies.

PFAS are also showing up in a growing number of drinking water supplies across the U.S. Often this contamination is linked to the use of firefighting foams commonly used at military bases, airports, and fire training areas. Some contamination comes from industrial sources. A 2016 study estimated that six million Americans were served by a public water supply that exceeded an EPA health guideline for two PFAS chemicals. More recently, the Environmental Working Group estimated that over 100 million Americans have these toxic chemicals in their drinking water.

What can you do to reduce your exposure?

Avoid:

- Products with the ingredient PTFE or other “fluoro” ingredients listed on the label
- Stain-resistant furniture and carpets, as well as stain-resistant treatments and waterproofing sprays
- Microwave popcorn and fast-food packaging

Choose:

- Fresh foods to avoid take-out containers and other food packaging
- Cast iron, stainless steel, glass, or enamel cookware instead of Teflon
- An activated carbon or reverse osmosis filtration system for your drinking water
- Nylon or silk dental floss that is uncoated or coated in natural wax
- Products from brands that do not use PFAS (www.pfascentral.org/pfas-free-products)

Make your voice heard!

- Ask your water supplier about PFAS testing in your town
- Tell retailers and manufacturers you want products made without PFAS
- Contact your elected officials and ask them to support restrictions on PFAS in consumer products and remediation of contaminated sites

CONTACT US

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