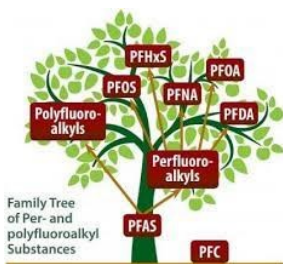


# PFAS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

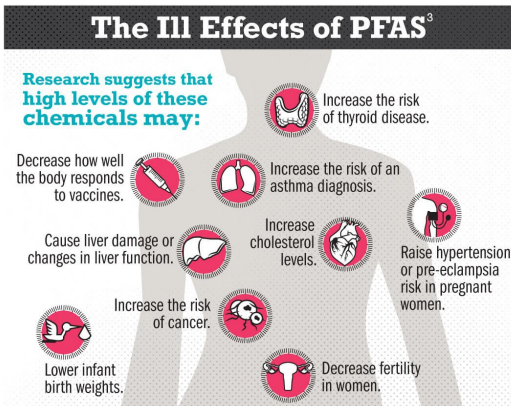
## What are PFAS?



Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, also known as PFAS or “forever chemicals,” are a group of over 15,000+ man-made, toxic chemicals used in a variety of products. Two types of PFAS--PFOA and PFOS--have been phased out of production in the US, but not out of our environment. However, these two types have been replaced by other forms of PFAS that also cause severe threats to our health and environment.

## Why should we be concerned about PFAS?

PFAS do not break down in the environment. They can easily travel in air, dust, food, soil, and water. They can be found in water, fish, food, food wrappers, cosmetics, personal care products, clothing, fire-fighting foam, building supplies, pesticides, and many household products: nonstick pans, rugs, and mattresses. Across the country, PFAS have been found in both public water systems and private wells, posing threats to many communities. There is also evidence that PFAS are present in our rain and snow.



The prevalence of PFAS in our everyday lives poses concerning health risks. These chemicals may cause thyroid disease, ulcerative colitis, high cholesterol, pregnancy-induced hypertension, weakened immune systems, reproductive health problems in both men and women, learning and developmental disabilities in infants and children, and various cancers. Studies have proven that PFAS have been present in the breast milk of 100% of the women tested.

## Are PFAS present in Vermont?



Vermont has over 200 contaminated sites across the state: 60 public drinking water systems, 5 military sites, 36+ landfills, 173 industrial sites, 7+ wastewater treatment plants, 5 airports, 5 fire protection sites, and 8+ Superfund sites. PFAS enters the Winooski River near the Burlington Airport and the Vermont National Guard. It is likely that PFAS is in many of our waterways and flowing into Lake Champlain, Lake Memphremagog, and up into Canada. Vermont has just

started to test fish tissue for PFAS, a matter of deep concern considering the high levels of PFAS bio-accumulation in fish in many parts of the country.

## What products should I avoid?

It is not easy to tell which products contain PFAS. If you see the words “non-stick,” “water-resistant,” “stain-resistant,” or “long lasting,” you should research the product. The Environmental Working Group (EWG) has created EWG Verified safe product labels at: [www.ewg.org/ewgverified/](http://www.ewg.org/ewgverified/) Also go to PFAS Central at <https://pfascentral.org/pfas-free-products/>

Many of these products contain PFAS:

- **Sunscreen:** 67% contain harmful ingredients to children and adults
- **Cosmetics:** 48% of cosmetics contain PFAS chemicals
- **Personal Care Products:** shampoos, conditioners, moisturizers, nail polish, female hygiene products, toilet paper, etc.
- **Food:** Seafood and some produce contain high amounts of PFAS
- **Cleaning Products**
- **Bug Repellants and Pesticides**
- **Household and Consumer Products:** rugs, paints, mattresses, clothing, etc.
- **Cookware and Food Containers**
- **Children’s Products:** diapers, clothing, etc.
- **Water,** including tap, bottled, and well water



## How else can I avoid PFAS?



Besides checking products before buying them, you should know that the new Federal Advisory limit for PFOS and PFOA, two forms of PFAS, is 0.02 parts per trillion (ppt) and 0.004 ppt respectively. The Vermont state limit is 20 ppt for 5 forms of PFAS. Where does your water come from? Check out your public water source at [www.ewg.org/tapwater/](http://www.ewg.org/tapwater/) If you have a well, you can have it tested. And think about investing in a water filter! Not all filters clean out PFAS. Also be aware that many single use water bottles, as well as bottled water, contain PFAS and other hazardous chemicals.

## How can I get involved and learn more about PFAS?

Here in Vermont, a coalition of individuals and groups are interested in PFAS contamination from the military, as well as other forms of PFAS contamination and environmental toxins. We are providing advocacy and education for all interested individuals.

For information about military PFAS contamination, visit [www.militarypoisons.org](http://www.militarypoisons.org) . For information about the coalition, visit our Facebook page: [Vermont Military Poisons Project](#) or email [pfasinfo@wilpfus.org](mailto:pfasinfo@wilpfus.org)

*The Vermont PFAS Coalition is a project of the Women’s International League for Peace & Freedom (WILPF US), Earth Democracy Committee: <https://wilpfus.org/our-work/earth-democracy-0>*