Per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances are a group of human-made chemicals (of which there are thousands) known as PFAS. These chemicals were developed in the 1940s to repel water or make a surface slippery. Since then, PFAS have been adapted for many consumer products and are now common drinking water contaminants throughout the United States.

**HOW ARE WE EXPOSED TO PFAS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE?**

- **Water & Diet**
  - Over many years, PFAS have been discharged to fresh water and ocean water, which contaminates drinking water for people and results in PFAS contamination in fish. Food packaging, such as microwave popcorn bags, also contains PFAS, leading to food contamination.

- **Air**
  - PFAS outdoor air concentrations are found to be highest near industrial facilities that discharge PFAS emissions. These emissions are transported by wind and deposited in soil and in oceans, lakes, rivers and streams.

- **Soil**
  - PFAS make their way into soil due to discharge from industry, deposits from the air, leaching from a landfill or sludge from wastewater treatment plants placed on the land. PFAS in soil then enter the water.

- **Consumer & Industry Products**
  - PFAS are used in industrial processes and are incorporated into many water, stain and grease-resistant products, including clothing, carpet, furniture, non-stick cookware, food packaging, takeout containers, personal care products and ski waxes. PFAS have also been used historically in firefighting foam.

**WHO IS AT RISK FROM PFAS EXPOSURE?**

EVERYONE! BUT IN PARTICULAR:

- Residents living near areas with higher levels of PFAS in the water, air and soil
- Anyone drinking water from contaminated water sources including private wells
- Pregnant women, babies and children who are especially sensitive to PFAS
- People who regularly use or produce products containing PFAS
- People who eat certain packaged foods or fish that contain PFAS

**HOW DOES PFAS REACH PEOPLE IN NH?**

- **Environment**
- **Industry**
- **Human Exposure**
- **Waste Management**

PFAS interfere with:
- the body’s hormones
- the ability to fight infection
- growth and development in children

PFAS increase risk of:
- high cholesterol
- thyroid disorders
- certain types of cancer

Click Here for an FAQ with more information!
Communities are taking action:
- Merrimack Citizens for Clean Water, was formed in 2016 when NHDES ordered the closing of two of the six Merrimack, NH public water wells as they tested over the state regulatory limit for PFAS at that time.
- Testing for Pease is a community action group founded in 2015 in response to PFAS contamination at the Pease Tradeport.

Protective PFAS Regulations are in place in New Hampshire
State and federal legislators are working to pass additional protective policies
Research is ongoing to better understand the effects of PFAS on human health and wildlife

Check with your public water supplier for PFAS levels. Homeowners with private wells are solely responsible for testing and treating their water. The only way for private well users to know if you have PFAS in your water is to TEST IT. See recommended water tests for NH private wells here.

Consider in-home water filtration options.

Use a wet mop instead of sweeping with a broom to reduce exposure to dust, which can harbor PFAS and other toxic chemicals.

Check out consumer product information from Environmental Working Group to avoid PFAS in common products like cookware, rain jackets, makeup, and certain types of dental floss.

Visit PFAS Central for a list of PFAS-Free products.

Avoid eating foods packaged in material containing PFAS, such as microwave popcorn and fast-food.

Avoid stain resistant coatings on carpets, furniture and other upholstery.

Questions? Email: PFAS.questions@dartmouth.edu

This project is supported by the National Institutes of Health Grant number P42ES007373 from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, or the National Institutes of Health.
Fact sheet Last Updated: August 2021