

Health Effects Linked to Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)

Some scientific studies suggest that certain PFAS may affect different systems in the body. NCEH/ATSDR and our partners are working to learn more about how exposure to PFAS might affect people's health—especially exposure to PFAS in water and food.

What are some possible health effects from exposure to PFAS?

Although more research is needed, some studies in people have shown that certain PFAS may

- affect growth, learning, and behavior of infants and older children
- lower a woman's chance of getting pregnant
- interfere with the body's natural hormones
- increase cholesterol levels
- affect the immune system and
- increase the risk of cancer

At this time, scientists are still learning about the health effects of exposures to mixtures of PFAS.

Should I have my blood tested for PFAS?

Talk to your doctor or other health professionals (for example, regional Pediatric and Environmental Specialty Units or PEHSUs) if you want or need to know your blood PFAS levels.

- Although, tests can measure the amount of PFAS in your blood, the results won't tell you how PFAS will affect your health now or in the future. The test results will only tell you and your health care provider if you have been exposed to PFAS.
- Blood testing for PFAS is not a routine test offered by most doctors or health departments.
- Keep in mind that most people in the United States have one or more specific PFAS in their blood, especially perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA).

Blood tests for PFAS are most useful when they are part of either a scientific investigation or a health study.

- A scientific investigation can show the levels of PFAS in people within a community that may have been exposed to the substances.
 - » For example, scientists can use the results to estimate the highest and lowest levels of PFAS levels in a specific community or PFAS levels in special groups, such as children. Additional information can show other factors that may affect test results, like your age and job, where you get your drinking water, and how long you have lived in the area.
- Scientists can compare investigation results to those in other communities, track trends in exposure over time, and use results to show the need for health studies or actions in the future.



NCEH/ATSDR – National Centers for Environmental Health/Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

PFOS – Perfluorooctane Sulfonic Acid

PFOA - Perfluorooctanoic Acid