

What You Need to Know About PFBS (Perfluorobutane Sulfonic Acid)

About PFBS

PFBS (perfluorobutane sulfonic acid) is a chemical made by humans. PFBS is a type of PFAS (perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substance), which is also known as a forever chemical because it is hard to break down in the environment.¹ PFBS can be present in food packaging, firefighting foam, and consumer products (such as perfumes, cosmetics, and detergents).¹ This means that you may come in contact with PFBS during your everyday life.



Exposure to PFBS

You can be exposed to PFBS in different ways including:

- Drinking water that has PFBS
- Eating foods that have PFBS
- Using consumer products that have PFBS
- Breathing air that has PFBS.¹

PFBS in the Environment

PFBS can be found in the soil and water, including groundwater and surface water. In addition, industries that use products with PFBS chemicals can release these chemicals into the environment through the water and air. These chemicals can move long distances through the air and then get into water wells, lakes, and rivers.¹

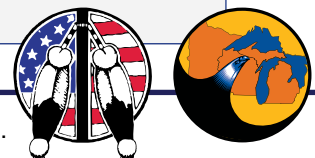
Health Effects of PFBS

There is limited research on the health effects of PFBS. Some studies looked at the effects of PFBS exposure in animals. They found that there were health effects, specifically on the animal's reproductive organs. Some sources suggest PFBS may also negatively affect human health, but that has yet to be confirmed.¹

Guidelines for PFBS Exposure

Some organizations have created guidelines for the maximum level of PFBS exposure that is considered safe for people. The maximum level varies by organization and is given in parts per trillion (ppt), which is the unit used to measure PFBS contamination. (See table below.)

Organization	Health Advisory Levels for PFBS
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) ²	Drinking Water: 2,000 ppt Groundwater: No guideline available
Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) ⁴	Drinking Water: 420 ppt Groundwater: 420 ppt
Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) ¹	Drinking Water: 100 ppt Groundwater: 100 ppt
Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) ¹	Drinking Water: No guideline available Groundwater: 450,000 ppt



Steps to Limit PFBS Exposure

There are steps you can take to reduce your PFBS exposure.



Test Your Water at Home

Check the level of PFBS in your water at home. If you get your water from a public drinking system, contact your local water utility to learn more about PFBS and the current level of PFBS in your water system. If you get your water from a private drinking well, have frequent testing to see if PFBS is in your water.³

Once you know the PFBS level in your home's water, compare this number with your state's standards for safe levels of PFBS in drinking water. If the PFBS levels in your water are concerning, use a different water source for drinking water, cooking, and preparing food if possible and contact your health department or state environmental protection agency about what actions can be taken to reduce PFBS levels in your water.³

Make Choices That Lower Daily Exposure

Below are more steps you can take individually to reduce exposure to PFBS.

- Install an in-home water treatment product that is NSF/ANSI 53 or NSF/ANSI 58 certified.³
- Use caution and follow consumption advisories for fish and other foods from waterways that can have PFBS. Contact your state or Tribal fish advisory program to see which waterways have PFBS contaminants.⁵

- Use stainless-steel and cast-iron cookware instead of nonstick cookware.⁵
- Bring your own metal or glass container for to-go food, which can minimize exposure to PFBS on take-out containers.⁵
- Use caution with foods (such as hamburgers, french fries, and pastries) that come in grease-resistant packaging, which may contain PFBS.⁵
- Avoid consumer products that contain PFBS, especially those described as nonstick, waterproof, stain-resistant, or wrinkle-free.⁵

Sources:

1. Drinking water health advisory: perfluorobutane sulfonic acid (CASRN 375-73-5) and related compound potassium perfluorobutane sulfonate (CASRN 29420-49-3). United States Environmental Protection Agency; June 2022. Publication #EPA/822/R-22/006. Accessed February 2024. <https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2022-06/drinking-water-pfbs-2022.pdf>
2. Environmental and health impacts of PFAS. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Accessed February 2024. <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/PFAS/Impacts.html>
3. Meaningful and achievable steps you can take to reduce your risk. United States Environmental Protection Agency. Updated August 8, 2023. Accessed February 2024. <https://www.epa.gov/pfas/meaningful-and-achievable-steps-you-can-take-reduce-your-risk>
4. PFAS maximum contaminant levels (MCLs). Michigan PFAS Action Response Team. Accessed February 2024. <https://www.michigan.gov/pfasresponse/drinking-water/mcl>
5. 10 things you can do about toxic PFAS chemicals. Clean Water Action. Accessed February 2024. <https://cleanwater.org/10-things-you-can-do-about-toxic-pfas-chemicals>

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