



GENERAL BACKGROUND ON PFAS AND CALIFORNIA'S LEADERSHIP

WHAT ARE PFAS?

Here are three quick facts about PFAS:

1. *They are toxic:* PFAS — short for “per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances” — are toxic chemicals that have been linked to various forms of cancers, developmental defects, infertility, immune system damage, and liver damage. Further, they are stable in the environment, resistant to degradation, persistent in soil, and known to leach into groundwater.
2. *They are man-made:* PFAS do not occur naturally in the environment. They have been manufactured since the 1940s by companies such as 3M and DuPont. You might have heard of some PFAS already, like perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS), but there are *thousands* of different PFAS.
3. *They are widespread:* Companies add PFAS to a wide array of consumer products, including food packaging, non-stick cookware, clothing, carpets, shoes, fabrics, polishes, waxes, paints, and cleaning products.

WHY ARE PFAS USED?

PFAS can make items slick, non-stick, stain-resistant, water-resistant, or grease-resistant. Those benefits, however, come with serious risks for your health and the environment. You can learn more about those risks below.

Critically, non-PFAS alternatives are available. For example, in May 2021, the California Department of Toxic Substances Control [published a report](#) on PFAS in food packaging that describes a variety of alternative options.

WHAT IS CALIFORNIA DOING TO ADDRESS PFAS?

The California Legislature has shown leadership in working to reduce PFAS exposures. In the last several sessions, it has enacted the following bills restricting the use of PFAS in different types of products:

- [SB 1044](#) (Allen, 2020): bans PFAS in firefighting foam, except where it is federally required, beginning in 2022.
- [AB 2762](#) (Muratsuchi, 2020): bans 24 toxic chemicals, including certain PFAS, from cosmetic products in California.
- [AB 1200](#) (Ting, 2021): bans the presence of PFAS in food packaging beginning in 2023.
- [AB 652](#) (Friedman, 2021): bans PFAS in children’s products beginning in 2023.
- [AB 2771](#) (Friedman, 2022): bans PFAS in personal care and beauty products beginning in 2025.
- [AB 1817](#) (Ting, 2022): bans PFAS in fabrics beginning in 2025.



PFAS EXPOSURE AND WAYS TO LIMIT EXPOSURE

WHAT IS THE EXTENT OF PFAS CONTAMINATION IN CALIFORNIA?

According to Biomonitoring California – a joint project of the California Department of Toxic Substances Control, the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, and the California Department of Public Health – one or more PFAS are present in the blood of nearly 100% of Californians tested. The U.S. Center for Disease Control, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) explains, “Because PFAS are at low levels in some foods and in the environment (air, water, soil, etc.) completely eliminating exposure is unlikely.”

Notably, low-income communities and communities of color [experience](#) disproportionate exposure to pollution, including PFAS, and the corresponding health impacts from that exposure.

HOW DOES PFAS EXPOSURE OCCUR?

PFAS exposure can occur in your home in many ways:

WHERE PFAS EXPOSURE CAN OCCUR IN YOUR HOME

BATHROOM

- Shampoo
- Cosmetics
- Dental floss
- Menstrual products

BEDROOM

- Mattress cover
- Stain resistant clothing
- Sweat resistant exercise clothing
- No-iron shirts
- Waterproof coats and jackets

LIVING ROOM

- Household dust
- Stain resistant carpets
- Cleaning products
- Furniture, especially with stain resistant material
- Floor waxes, polishes, and finishes








KITCHEN

- Contaminated drinking water
- Fish from PFAS-contaminated water
- Non-stick cookware, especially if scratched or overheated
- Fast-food and takeout containers
- Microwave popcorn bags
- Pizza boxes
- Candy wrappers
- Dishwasher detergent

WHAT HEALTH IMPACTS IS PFAS EXPOSURE LINKED TO?

PFAS can cause serious health impacts:

HEALTH IMPACTS LINKED TO PFAS EXPOSURE:

-  **Increased risk of certain types of cancers**
-  **Developmental defects**
-  **Immune system damage**
-  **Liver damage**
-  **Infertility**
-  **Increased cholesterol levels**
-  **Decreased vaccine response in children**
-  **Increased risk of high blood pressure or pre-eclampsia in pregnant women**



HOW CAN I LIMIT PFAS EXPOSURE?

There are meaningful steps that you can take to limit your exposure to PFAS:

TIPS THAT MAY HELP LIMIT YOUR PFAS EXPOSURE

- **Contact your public water provider and ask if they have tested for PFAS**
- **Consider purchasing a water filter that removes PFAS**
- **Avoid using nonstick cookware and utensils, especially if scratched or overheated**
- **Avoid fabrics and materials labeled stain- or water-repellent**
- **Choose personal care products without Teflon (the brand name for PTFE) or fluoro- ingredients**
- **Remove food from grease-proof paper packaging before storing or reheating**
- **Regularly clean household dust, especially from floors where babies crawl**
- **Ask government officials to continue taking action to limit PFAS exposure**

