



# PFAS and Foam

Foam forms on many of Michigan’s 11,000 rivers, lakes and streams. It can contain harmful bacteria or chemicals, such as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). If a body of water has PFAS in it, its foam can also have PFAS in it. In rare cases, human-made foam, such as firefighting foam, can also be released into a body of water.

Many PFAS don’t break down easily and can stay in the environment for a long time. If we swallow those PFAS, they likely stay in our bodies for a long time and lead to potential health effects.

**To protect your health, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) recommends avoiding all foam on Michigan lakes, rivers, streams and other surface waters.**

## Foam:

- Can be white, off-white or brown.
- Is usually lightweight.
- May have an earthy or fishy smell.
- Often piles up in bays, eddies, dams and other river barriers.
- Can be sticky.
- May blow inland.
- May contain harmful bacteria, algae or chemicals, such as PFAS.



## Don’t touch or swallow foam.

If you do touch foam:

- Rinse it off as soon as possible and bathe or shower after swimming.
- Be sure to wash your hands before preparing food, eating or putting your hands in your mouth.
- Don’t swallow it.

The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) recommends people keep their pets from touching or swallowing foam on bodies of water.

- Animals can swallow foam that has built up on their fur when grooming themselves.
- If animals touch foam, they should be rinsed off and bathed with fresh water.
- Pet owners with questions related to animals and foam should contact their veterinarian.

## For More Information

- Visit the Michigan PFAS Action Response Team web page on PFAS foam on lakes and streams: [bit.ly/FoamOnWater](https://bit.ly/FoamOnWater).
- Call the MDHHS Environmental Health hotline at 800-648-6942.



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