

Michigan PFAS Exposure and Health Study (MiPEHS) Frequently Asked Questions

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General Study Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of this study?

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is conducting the Michigan PFAS Exposure and Health Study (MiPEHS) to understand how community exposure to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) relates to certain health conditions in humans. Understanding the relationship between PFAS exposure and health outcomes helps communities and government agencies make better decisions that protect public health. This study is voluntary and free of charge.

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How can I join the study?

- Please call toll-free at 855-322-3037 to confirm your eligibility and enroll in the study. You can also [contact us](#) to learn more and sign up to receive study updates.
- If you are eligible, we will ask about your availability and any accommodations you require (like language preference or mobility) before we schedule a study office appointment. Please allow about 10 minutes for the call.
- Once you are enrolled, you will receive a welcome packet in the mail with information on the location, date, and time of your study office visit. You will also receive more detailed information about what to expect at your study office visit and how to prepare.
- You can visit our website at Michigan.gov/DEHbio and click on “[MiPEHS](#)” to learn more.
- MiPEHS study updates will also be provided at Michigan.gov/PFASResponse in the “Health” section.

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Who can participate in the study?

You may be able to participate in the study if you:

- Currently live in the City of Parchment or Cooper Township [study area](#) *and* your well or municipal water supply was a source of your drinking water between 2005 and 2018.
Or
- Currently live in the Belmont/Rockford [study area](#), have had your private drinking well water tested by or at the direction of a State of Michigan agency, *and* that well was a source of your drinking water between 2005 and 2018.
Or
- Are a current or former dependent of an adult that lives at an eligible household, and you drank that household’s water between 2005 and 2018.

Everyone who participated MiPEHS previously is eligible to participant in all subsequent phases.

- You are still eligible even if you have moved since you participated last time.

If you fit any of these descriptions or are unsure if you do, please call us at 855-322-3037 for more information or to enroll. Adults and children of all ages can participate, but only those age 12 and older are eligible to have their blood drawn for PFAS measurements and health tests. The study is voluntary and free of charge.

Individuals who are under house arrest or are in prison or juvenile detention are not eligible to participate in MiPEHS.

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What are PFAS?

PFAS are a large group of human-made chemicals that are resistant to heat, water, and oil. These chemicals have been linked to some health effects, but there is still much that is not known about PFAS. For more information on PFAS and health, visit Michigan.gov/PFASResponse and click on the “health” tab.

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Who are RTI and Frontline National?

RTI, or RTI International, and Frontline National are two organizations partnering with MDHHS to conduct MiPEHS. RTI and Frontline National staff will help you schedule and complete your appointment and assist you in answering any questions you have throughout the study. They will be at the study office to assist with the blood collection and body measurements, like height and weight.

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If I am eligible and choose to participate, what will I have to do?

- You will first be asked to complete an online survey before coming into the study office.
- Next you will go to a local study office for a scheduled appointment where you will sign a consent form and blood samples will be collected. You will give a blood sample for PFAS measurements and health tests from your arm. Also, a blood sample from a finger-poke will be collected as another way of measuring PFAS in your body.
- Participants who are 12 years old and older should not eat or drink anything besides water for 8 hours before their study office appointment. This is because eating or drinking can affect the results of blood tests.
- Children 11 years old and younger do not need to fast before their study office appointment because they will not provide a blood sample.
- As part of the study, we may ask to test your home’s drinking water for PFAS. This will require a visit to your home by one of our trained staff.
- This study will include three study office visits. They will occur every other year, beginning in 2020. We encourage you to take part in all three visits, but this is not required to enroll in the study.

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What will I receive if I choose to participate?

- You can receive all of your test results, including:
 - PFAS blood test results if you choose to receive them.
 - Health test results (such as your cholesterol and glucose levels).
 - Other blood test results. While the focus of MiPEHS is PFAS, we will also test the blood of adults 18 and older for polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). PCBs can be found in fish and sediment from the Kalamazoo River due to historical pollution. When ingested, PCBs have been linked to some health problems that are similar to the health problems linked to PFAS. If you are tested for PCBs and want to receive those results, we will send them to you.
 - Your home water PFAS test results if you are selected for water sampling.
- At the end of the study, you will receive a report summarizing the findings of the entire study.
- As a thank you for your time, each participant will receive up to \$105 for completing all components of the study. Bonus gift cards are offered in Phases 2 and 3 for signing up early and for completing more than one phase.

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Why should I participate?

By participating in MiPEHS, you may:

- Learn what your PFAS blood levels are now and at all future study office visits you attend.
- Contribute to scientific knowledge about PFAS and potential effects on people's health.
- Contribute to the understanding of your community's exposure to PFAS.

The data collected may help:

- Doctors know which health problems to watch for in people who have been exposed to PFAS in their drinking water.
- Scientists better understand how PFAS exposures may affect the health of the population.
- Foster a healthier Michigan for future generations.

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What are you doing to keep me safe from COVID-19 during my study office visit or water sample visit?

- Staff are following all current CDC and MDHHS guidance on COVID-19 safety.
- MDHHS and RTI have established hygiene protocols for the study offices that ensure the highest level of protection for both participants and study staff. These protocols are based on the recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and will be updated as new information becomes available.
- These precautions include:
 - Increased cleaning and sanitation of the study office.
 - Requiring face coverings, such as masks, for all study participants and staff while inside the study office.
 - Requiring study office employees to stay home if they are ill.
 - Social distancing of 6 feet and barriers between workstations where possible.
 - Requiring study participants to complete COVID-19 screening questions.

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Participant Appointment Frequently Asked Questions

How should I prepare for my appointment?

- Review all the enclosed materials in the MiPEHS welcome packet that you received by mail.
- If you have anemia, cancer or are receiving treatment for cancer, a bleeding disorder, or are taking blood thinners other than aspirin, or taking medications to lower your blood sugar (for example, diabetes medication), please talk to your healthcare provider before your appointment.
- If you prefer to complete the survey before arriving at the study office, please go the web address enclosed in the welcome packet and follow the directions to complete the survey.
- If you prefer to complete the survey at the study office rather than from home, fill out the Pre-Appointment Worksheet included in the MiPEHS welcome packet. This worksheet will help you prepare for the questions we will ask at your appointment. For example, medications you are taking, water filtration, and other information.
- If you will need special assistance at the appointment and have not already told the study staff, please call as soon as you are able. The number is 855-322-3037.
- **If you are 12 years old or older, fast for at least 8 hours leading up to your appointment. Drink water the day of your appointment**, but please do not drink other beverages or eat any food, including candy, gum, soda, coffee, or tea. Unless you were told by your health care provider to hold your medications when fasting, you should continue to take any medications as prescribed. If you are unsure about taking your medications while fasting, please talk to your health care provider.

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What should I do if I cannot fast before the appointment?

- If you are unable to fast for a medical reason, such as diabetes, you can still participate in the study.
- Instead of fasting, please eat fat-free or low-fat foods.
- Please bring a list to your appointment of everything you ate in the 8 hours before your appointment and when you ate it.

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Will I get my blood test results?

- If you would like your PFAS and PCB blood test results, you will receive them in a letter several months after your appointment. We will ask you whether or not you would like to receive these results as part of the Informed Consent document provided to you at the study office.
- All participants whose blood is tested will receive their health marker test results (like cholesterol) in the mail.
- Several labs will complete the blood tests for us. You may receive your test results at different times in separate letters.
- You will receive summaries of the study findings when they are available.

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What will I learn from my blood test results?

Your results **can** tell you:

- The amount of certain PFAS and PCBs (if applicable) in your blood at the time of your blood draw.
- The health marker levels (like cholesterol) in your blood at the time of your blood draw.

Your results **cannot** tell you:

- Where any PFAS or PCBs in your blood came from.

- About chemicals we did not test for.
- If PFAS or PCBs are harming your health.
- If PFAS or PCBs will harm your health in the future.

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Will my home's water be tested for PFAS?

- Not everyone will have their water sampled. Participants who have a private drinking water well will all have their home's water tested. Some participants using municipal (city) water will be randomly selected for this part of the study.
- If you are selected, we will arrange a time that is convenient for you to test the drinking water in your home for PFAS. A trained sanitarian will come to your home and sample the tap water. You are under no obligation to agree to this sampling.
- If we test your drinking water, we will send you the test results in the mail. It could take 3 months or longer after your home water appointment for these to arrive.

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How will you protect the information I provide?

- We will store your answers and test results using a code number and not your name. Your name and contact information will be stored separate from your answers and test results. This means only authorized staff can match you with your test results.
- Electronic records will be kept securely in an electronic file. Paper records will be stored securely in a locked file cabinet, first at the study office and later at the MDHHS office in Lansing, Michigan.
- Only certain study staff at MDHHS will have access to your information and test results. Privacy laws prohibit all project staff from disclosing your information.

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Will other people know my test results if I participate?

- To protect your privacy, we will store your results using a code number instead of your name. All the information collected for this project is confidential and protected by Michigan law. Study staff are bound by law not to disclose your information.
- Anything written publicly about the project will only describe group results. It will not include information that could identify any individual participant, such as a name or address.
- We expect other researchers will request data and/or samples from this study to answer other questions about PFAS. On the Informed Consent document, you will select whether you give permission to MDHHS to share your contact information and/or your unidentified ("de-identified") survey answers, de-identified test results, and de-identified samples (if requested prior to the end of the study).
 - If you give permission, MDHHS will remove all information that could identify you from your survey answers, test results, and samples before allowing access to other researchers. Only researchers that have an MDHHS IRB-approved study protocol and have completed a Data Use Agreement (that is, meet MDHHS privacy and security requirements) would be able to access this information. MDHHS would not need to obtain an additional consent from you before sharing this type of de-identified information.

- We will not share your identifiable information and/or samples without your written permission. You will have the opportunity to decide if you want MDHHS to share identifiable information (that is, survey answers, test results, and/or samples) with any researcher outside of MDHHS. After you have given your permission, only researchers that have an MDHHS IRB-approved study protocol and have completed a Data Use Agreement (that is, meet MDHHS privacy and security requirements) will be provided your identifiable information and/or samples.

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What if I still have questions?

If you still have questions, you can find out more by:

- Calling us at **844-464-7327**
- Visiting our website: Michigan.gov/DEHbio and clicking on “[MiPEHS](#)”
- Emailing us directly: MDHHS-PFASHealthStudy@Michigan.gov

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