PFAS in Drinking Water

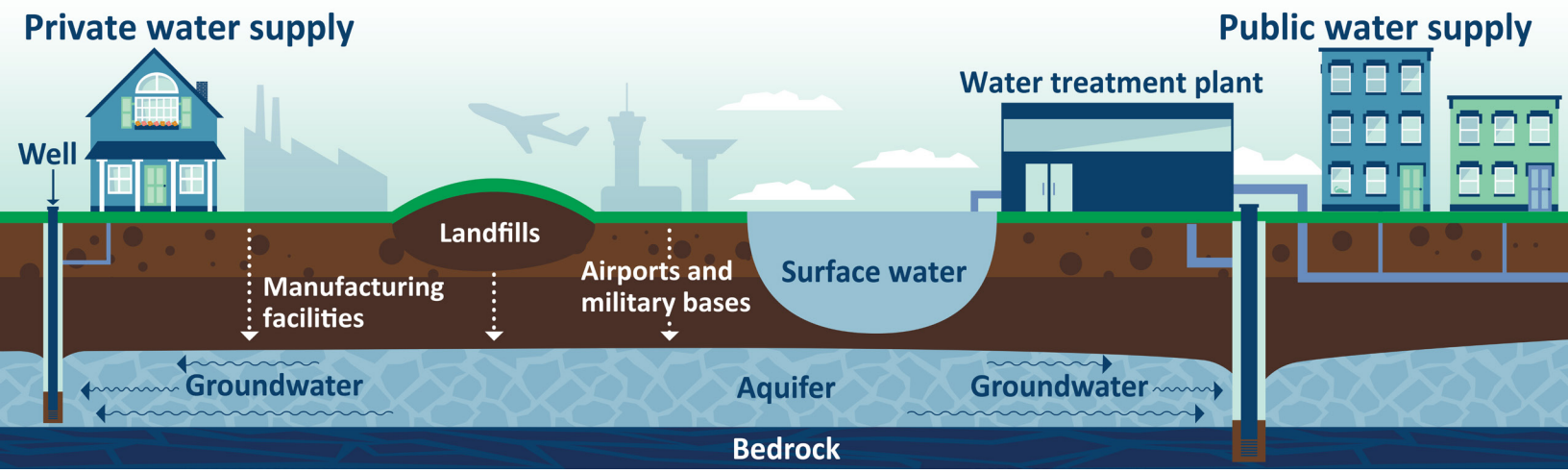
Per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a large group of human-made chemicals. PFAS are used in many products such as stain repellents, fast food wrappers, waterproofing sprays and many other consumer products.

Tap into the facts about PFAS to learn if you should consider testing your drinking water to protect your health.

How PFAS get into drinking water

PFAS can get into drinking water sources when products containing PFAS are used or spilled onto the ground. Common sources of PFAS include:

- **Landfills.** PFAS are used in many different consumer products that can eventually end up in landfills. PFAS in landfills can seep from the soil into drinking water sources.
- **Airports and military bases**. PFAS are used in some firefighting foam. Drinking water sources contaminated with PFAS near airports and military bases are often associated with the use of firefighting foam
- **Manufacturing facilities.** PFAS are used in manufacturing. Industrial processes may release PFAS into the lakes, rivers or groundwater that become your drinking water.



How PFAS in drinking water may affect your health

Many PFAS don't break down easily and can stay in the environment for a long time. If we swallow those PFAS, they stay in our bodies for a long time and may lead to potential health effects. Scientists are still learning about the health problems associated with PFAS exposure. Some studies in people have shown that certain PFAS are linked to:

- Liver damage.
- Higher cholesterol, especially total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol.
- Small decreases in infant birth weight.
- Developing certain types of cancer, in particular kidney and testicular cancers.
- High blood pressure or pre-eclampsia in pregnant women.
- Thyroid disease.
- Decreased immune system response to vaccines in children.
- Reduced fertility.

How to find out if PFAS are in your drinking water

Step 1: Know where your water comes from.

- Learn about the different water supply types to determine where your water comes from at Eh.Michigan.gov/DW-Supply-Types.

Step 2: Determine if you need to test your drinking water for PFAS.

Public Water Supply

If you are on a public water supply, the water coming into your home may already be regularly tested for PFAS. You should check with your public water supply for results.

Private Residential Well

If you have a private residential well, water testing is your responsibility. **The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) recommends private residential well owners test their drinking water for PFAS at least once.**

- Visit Eh.Michigan.gov/PFASsites to see if you live near a potential PFAS site. If you do, call the MDHHS Environmental Health Hotline at 800-648-6942 to see if your home is in an area that is under investigation. If it is, we may be able to test your water for free.
- If we cannot test your water for free, contact a **certified drinking water lab**. They can help you get sample bottles and provide instructions on how to sample your water yourself. Visit Eh.Michigan.gov/PFASLabTesting for a list of labs that offer PFAS testing. It is important to follow the instructions provided for accurate results. To learn more about testing your home's water for PFAS, visit Eh.Michigan.gov/HomeSamplingGuidance.

Step 3: Understand a test result for PFAS in drinking water.

- You can call the MDHHS Environmental Health Hotline to review your water test results with a staff member. They can help you understand any potential risks and advise on next steps based on your results.

How to reduce PFAS in drinking water

Consider a water filter. Some water filters are certified to reduce certain PFAS in your water, such as:

- **NSF/ANSI 53** for PFAS reduction like those made with granular activated carbon (GAC).
- **NSF/ANSI 58** for PFAS reduction for reverse osmosis (RO) systems.

These certifications mean the filter has been tested using a standardized process and it may reduce specific PFAS in drinking water. It is important to follow all manufacturers' instructions to make sure the filter is reducing PFAS as expected. Also, there are no filters that are certified to reduce all types of PFAS.

If you live in an area that is under investigation for PFAS contamination, you may qualify for a free water filter. Call the MDHHS Environmental Health Hotline at 800-648-6942 to learn more.

Connect to a community public water supply. If you have a private residential well, check to see if a public water supply is nearby. You may be able to connect your home.

For More Information

MDHHS Environmental Health Hotline
800-648-6942
Michigan.gov/CareforMiDrinkingWater
Michigan.gov/PFAS

Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy
Michigan.gov/DrinkingWater
Michigan.gov/WaterWellConstruction

Michigan PFAS Response Team (MPART)
Michigan.gov/PFASResponse

Laboratory Services
Michigan.gov/EGLElab

List of local health departments
Eh.Michigan.gov/MiHealthDepartment

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