

# How PFAS Enter Your Body

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of widely used and potentially harmful chemicals. They are commonly used in products that repel oil, water, stains and grease. They are difficult to avoid and small amounts of these chemicals likely enter most people's bodies each day.

PFAS are associated with several different health effects. You can learn more about those health effects at [EH.Michigan.gov/PFAS-Health](https://eh.michigan.gov/PFAS-Health). The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) recommends everyone in Michigan reduce their exposure to all PFAS when and wherever possible.

## Swallowing PFAS is the main way PFAS gets into the body.

### Swallowing PFAS

You can accidentally swallow PFAS when you drink water or eat food that contains PFAS, such as fish from contaminated lakes.

You can also accidentally swallow PFAS if you touch PFAS-containing foam or consumer products and do not wash your hands before eating or putting your hands in your mouth.

Because PFAS leave the body very slowly, continuing to swallow PFAS can cause them to build up in your body.

**Learn more about drinking water and how to lower your exposure to PFAS on the back of this fact sheet.**

**Lower your exposure by following MDHHS Eat Safe Fish guidelines. Visit [Michigan.gov/EatSafeFish](https://michigan.gov/EatSafeFish) for more information.**

**Lower your exposure by washing your hands before eating or putting your hands in your mouth.**



## PFAS can enter your body in other ways.

### Breathing in PFAS

Indoor air and household dust may have PFAS, but the amount in indoor air is typically low. These PFAS come from household products such as some floor waxes, stain repellents or other common consumer products.

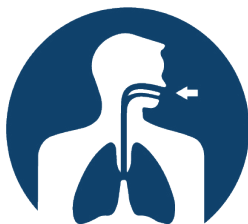
**Use a product database to learn the types of products likely to contain PFAS.** Please note that not all products with PFAS will list PFAS in the ingredients. Learn more at [EH.Michigan.gov/PFASproducts](https://eh.michigan.gov/PFASproducts).

### Absorbing PFAS through skin

Your skin is a good barrier to PFAS. However, PFAS could enter your body if high levels of PFAS stay on your skin for a long time. This could happen from playing or swimming in foam or using long-lasting cosmetics that contain high levels of PFAS.

**Lower your exposure by avoiding foam on lakes, rivers, and other bodies of water.** If you come into contact with foam, rinse it off your skin.

**Use a product database to learn the types of products likely to contain PFAS.** Please note that not all products with PFAS will list PFAS in the ingredients. Learn more at [EH.Michigan.gov/PFASproducts](https://eh.michigan.gov/PFASproducts).

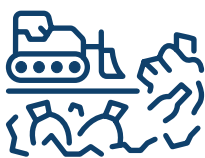


# When PFAS enter the environment, they can seep into drinking water sources, such as groundwater, lakes and rivers.

The following are some ways high levels of PFAS can get into our drinking water.



PFAS are used in many different consumer products that eventually end up in landfills. PFAS in unlined landfills can seep from the soil into drinking water sources.



PFAS used in manufacturing can be released into lakes and rivers during production or as wastewater. PFAS may be in industrial waste that can seep into the soil and drinking water sources.



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 foams.

## Testing

Public water supplies are required to test their water for many contaminants. However, residents with private residential wells are responsible for managing their own water systems.

Visit [EH.Michigan.gov/PFASinDrinkingWater](https://www.eh.michigan.gov/PFASinDrinkingWater) for details on testing your water. Not sure where your water comes from? You can learn more about water supply types at [Michigan.gov/CareforMiDrinkingWater](https://www.michigan.gov/CareforMiDrinkingWater).



## Water Filters

Some filters are certified to reduce certain PFAS in your water. If you are buying a water filter, read the packaging to be sure it has proper certification for total PFAS reduction, such as one of these certifications:

- **NSF/ANSI 53 for total PFAS reduction.** Look for this certification on filters like those made with granular activated carbon (GAC).
- **NSF/ANSI 58 certification for total PFAS reduction.** Look for this certification on reverse osmosis filtration systems.

Certifications like these mean the filter has been tested using a standardized process and is successful at reducing specific PFAS in drinking water.

Call the MDHHS Environmental Health hotline at 800-648-6942 to learn more about PFAS and your drinking water.

To learn more about PFAS, visit [Michigan.gov/PFASResponse](https://www.michigan.gov/PFASResponse).

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) does not discriminate against any individual or group on the basis of race, national origin, color, sex, disability, religion, age, height, weight, familial status, partisan considerations, or genetic information. Sex-based discrimination includes, but is not limited to, discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, sex characteristics, and pregnancy.

