Certified PFAS-Reducing Filters

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a large group of more than 5,000 human-made chemicals not naturally found in the environment. PFAS have been used in industrial settings and can be found in many manufactured and consumer products. The widespread use of PFAS has allowed these substances to get into some water that people use for drinking.

One way to reduce PFAS exposure is to filter drinking water. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) recommends using filters certified for total PFAS reduction.

Testing for PFAS in Drinking Water

The first step is to determine if PFAS is in your drinking water.

Public water supplies are tested regularly and the results are released in Consumer Confidence Reports (CCRs). Visit the MDHHS web page on City/Community Residential Water Supplies to learn more about CCRs and how to access them (URL: bit.ly/CityResWater). You can also find PFAS testing results for public water supplies on the Michigan PFAS Action Response Team (MPART) GIS web page (URL: bit.ly/PFASGIS).

Private residential well owners are responsible for their own well maintenance, including testing. Visit the MDHHS web page on Drinking Water Testing to learn more about labs that offer private residential well water PFAS testing and guidance on collecting a sample for testing (URL: bit.ly/DWtesting).

If a PFAS-reducing filter is right for you, it's important to make sure that it is certified to reduce PFAS.

Check Filter Certification

Filters can be certified for total PFAS reduction. When buying a filter, read the packaging to be sure it has proper certification to reduce PFAS, such as the following certifications from the NSF International/American National Standards Institute (NSF/ANSI):

- **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.

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

Choosing a Certified PFAS-Reducing Filter

There are different types of water filters that are NSF/ANSI 53 certified for total PFAS reduction and reverse osmosis systems that are NSF/ANSI 58 certified for total PFAS reduction in drinking water. Two types of water filters that reduce PFAS are granular activated carbon (GAC) filter systems and reverse osmosis (RO) systems.

Granular Activated Carbon Systems

GAC filter systems are made of organic materials, such as wood. In GAC filters, carbon filter cartridges capture PFAS and other harmful substances. GAC filter cartridges are usually able to treat more water than cartridges in other types of filters, such as reverse osmosis systems.

Reverse Osmosis Systems

RO systems contain sediment and carbon filters that are used to catch PFAS and other harmful substances. RO systems also have a membrane that water is filtered through. Some RO systems may have to be installed by professionals. RO systems can require frequent cartridge replacements.

When to Use Filtered Water

If you are concerned about PFAS in your drinking water, a certified PFAS-reducing water filter may help you reduce your exposure to PFAS.

MDHHS recommends that filtered water be used for:

Drinking.

Cooking.

Making baby formula.

Rinsing foods.

PFAS do not absorb easily into the skin. This means you do not have to use filtered water for the following activities:

Washing dishes.

Showering or bathing.

Laundry.

Cleaning.

Filter Maintenance

Water filters require maintenance for them to be effective. This maintenance often includes having to change your filter cartridge and/or membrane regularly. It is important to follow the manufacturer's instructions for installing, operating and maintaining a filter. If not followed correctly, the filter may not reduce PFAS as expected.

Some people find it helpful to review a filter's maintenance instructions before buying a filter as different filters can have different instructions for maintenance. You can usually find maintenance instructions in the manual that comes with a filter. You may also be able to find maintenance instructions for a filter on the manufacturer's website.

More Information

For more information on filters that can reduce PFAS in water, visit the MPART website on home filters (URL: bit.ly/HomeFilter).

If you have questions about PFAS and drinking water, you can call the MDHHS Environmental Health Hotline at 800-648-6942.

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Michigan Department of Health & Human Services