

PFAS and Drinking Water: What You Should Know

As more and more communities across the U.S. learn their drinking water contains PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances), you may be wondering if your drinking water contains these contaminants as well. Here's what you should know:

Does my tap water contain PFAS?

If you're concerned about PFAS in your drinking water or you live near one of the contamination sites listed on our PFAS Exchange, find out if your water has been tested for PFAS by contacting your local water utility or your health department.

The Environmental Working Group (EWG) has a searchable national tap water database that collects drinking water quality data, including information on PFAS, from public water utilities across the country. The data on PFAS, however, is mainly limited to large water supplies and is based on testing conducted between 2013 and 2015. Most smaller supplies have not been tested for PFAS.



If you have a private well, consider having your water tested. Be aware that water testing by a private lab can be costly and not all labs offer PFAS testing.

Contact your local health department to learn about routine testing services in your state. Or, find an accredited testing lab through The Nelac Institute (TNI)'s database.

Include in your search criteria the testing method "EPA 537" or "EPA 537.1"—the certified methods used for analyzing water samples for PFAS.

Can I treat my water?

There are two main types of water treatment systems that work best at removing PFAS from drinking water in people's homes. These systems can be installed at the point-of-entry, where the water enters your home, or at the point-of-use, such as your kitchen sink.

- Granular activated carbon (GAC) or solid carbon block filters are a relatively low-cost option. They are effective at removing long-chain PFAS (PFOA and PFOS are the two most often found in water) but are less effective at capturing the shorter-chain varieties.
- Reverse osmosis is considered the most effective technology for removing a wide range of PFAS, including short-chain chemicals. It is also the more expensive option and produces a significant amount of waste water, so these types of systems are typically only used at the point-of-use.

When choosing a filtering system, look for one that is NSF P473 certified, or meets the NSF/ANSI 53 standard for activated carbon filters and the NSF/ANSI 58 standard for reverse osmosis. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions and replace the cartridges or membranes as recommended.

A word about bottled water

Be aware that bottled water may not be a better option than tap water as many bottling companies get their water from municipal water supplies and are not required to test or treat for PFAS chemicals.

Contact your state environment or health department to find out if there's been any government testing of bottled water products sold in your state.

Learn more: [silentspring.org/PFAS](https://www.silentspring.org/PFAS)