

CDC Newsroom

[CDC \(https://www.cdc.gov/\)](https://www.cdc.gov/) > [Newsroom Home](#) > [Press Materials](#) > [CDC Newsroom Releases](#)

CDC/ATSDR to Assess PFAS Exposure in Communities Near U.S. Military Bases

Press Release

For Immediate Release: Thursday, February 21, 2019

Contact: [CDC Media Relations \(https://www.cdc.gov/media\)](https://www.cdc.gov/media)

(404) 639-3286

ATSDR Media (770) 488-0700

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) announced today that they have identified communities to be a part of assessments to examine human exposure to per and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). The communities are near current or former military installations. The assessments are expected to begin in 2019 and continue through 2020 and are laying the groundwork for CDC/ATSDR's future multi-site health study that will look at the relationship between PFAS exposure and health outcomes.

PFAS are man-made chemicals that have been used in industry and consumer products since the 1950s. They have been used in non-stick cookware; water-repellent clothing, stain-resistant fabrics and carpets; some cosmetics; some firefighting foams; and products that resist grease, water, and oil. Scientists are still learning about the health effects of exposure to PFAS. Some studies have shown that PFAS exposure may affect growth, learning, and behavior of infants and older children; lower a woman's chance of getting pregnant; interfere with the body's natural hormones; increase cholesterol levels; affect the immune system; and increase the risk of cancer.

CDC/ATSDR partnered with the Pennsylvania Department of Health and the New York State Department of Health through a grant program with the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) to begin assessing exposure in the communities of Bucks and Montgomery County (PA) and Westhampton (NY). CDC/ATSDR will build upon the groundbreaking work done by Pennsylvania and New York to complete exposure assessments in eight additional locations starting in 2019:

- Berkeley County (WV) near Shepherd Field Air National Guard Base
- El Paso County (CO) near Peterson Air Force Base
- Fairbanks North Star Borough (AK) near Eielson Air Force Base
- Hampden County (MA) near Barnes Air National Guard Base
- Lubbock County (TX) near Reese Technology Center
- Orange County (NY) near Stewart Air National Guard Base
- New Castle County (DE) near New Castle Air National Guard Base
- Spokane County (WA) near Fairchild Air Force Base

The primary goal of these exposure assessments is to provide information to communities about levels of PFAS in their bodies. The results of these assessments will help communities better understand the extent of their environmental exposures to PFAS.

“The assessments will generate information about exposure to PFAS in affected communities and will extend beyond the communities identified, as the lessons learned can also be applied to communities facing similar PFAS drinking water exposures. This will serve as a foundation for future studies evaluating the impact of PFAS exposure on human health,” said Patrick Breyse, Ph.D., director, CDC’s National Center for Environmental Health and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry.

People in each of these communities will be selected randomly to participate in the exposure assessments. Participants will have their PFAS levels checked via blood and urine samples. Like the two pilot sites in Pennsylvania and New York, the exposure assessments will use statistically based sampling. The sampling results from participants can give scientists information about community-level exposure.

The exposure assessments are one part of CDC’s/ATSDR’s efforts to address PFAS exposure in communities. CDC/ATSDR is involved in over 30 sites nationwide and is currently working in the Pease International Tradeport community to test the protocol for the upcoming multi-site health study.

For more information about the PFAS Exposure Assessment or PFAS:
<https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/index.html> (<https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/index.html>) or
 call 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636).

###

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  (<http://www.hhs.gov/>)

CDC works 24/7 protecting America’s health, safety and security. Whether disease start at home or abroad, are curable or preventable, chronic or acute, or from human activity or deliberate attack, CDC responds to America’s most pressing health threats.

CDC is headquartered in Atlanta and has experts located throughout the United States and the world.