

# What are Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)?

**Perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a large group of man-made chemicals that have been used in industry and consumer products worldwide since the 1950s.**

- PFAS do not occur naturally, but are widespread in the environment.
- PFAS are found in people, wildlife, and fish all over the world.
- Some PFAS can stay in people's bodies a long time.
- Some PFAS do not break down easily in the environment.



**PFAS contamination may be in drinking water, food, indoor dust, some consumer products, and workplaces. Most non-worker exposures are from drinking contaminated water or eating food that contains PFAS.**

**Although some types of PFAS are no longer used, some products may still contain PFAS:**

- Food packaging materials
- Nonstick cookware
- Stain resistant carpet treatments
- Water resistant clothing
- Cleaning products
- Paints, varnishes, and sealants
- Firefighting foam
- Some cosmetics



**Learn more about PFAS.**

- Contact **1-800-CDC-INFO** for more information on this topic.
- Visit these websites:
  - » **ATSDR Website:** <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfc/index.html>
  - » **Environmental Protection Agency Website:** <https://www.epa.gov/chemical-research/research-and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas>
- Contact your state health agency for local information.
- Contact the Consumer Product Safety Commission at **(800)-638-2772** if you have questions about the products you use in your home.