

Perfluorinated Compounds (PFCs/PFAS) and water - drinking and other uses



DRINKING WATER

Who provides my drinking water?

If you receive a water bill, then you are connected to a public drinking water system. If your water bill is included in association dues, contact the manager to determine which system provides your water. If you do not receive a bill, you could be served by a private well. Please contact your local public health agency for more information.

What should I do?

PRIVATE WELL - As a precaution, individuals who have private wells that have not been tested or exceed the new health advisory should consider other sources of water. This especially is important for women who are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or breastfeeding as well as bottle-fed infants.

Alternate sources of water include water that is treated under the sink by a reverse osmosis system or bottled water.

PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM - Please consult with your water system. If perfluorinated compound levels are above the health advisory - you should consider other sources of water. This especially is important for women who are pregnant, planning to become pregnant, or breastfeeding as well as bottle-fed infants. Alternate sources of water include water that is treated under the sink by a reverse osmosis system or bottled water.

How can PFCs be removed from my water?

Perfluorinated compounds are not removed from water by boiling. Certain treatments can remove these compounds from drinking water. One treatment that works is reverse osmosis, which can be installed under your sink. Reverse osmosis equipment can be purchased at local home improvement stores.

Contacts

- Tri-County Health Department
www.tchd.org
EHwater@tchd.org
Elaine Hassinger 720-200-1583
Deanne Kelly 303-439-5909
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
303-312-6077 Lisa McClain-Vanderpool
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
303-692-2606 | www.colorado.gov/cdphe/pfcs

OTHER WATER USES

Can I cook with the water?

If the levels of perfluorinated compounds in your water are above the health advisory level, consider using alternate sources of water for foods where water is absorbed or consumed such as soups, rice and beans. Tap water can be used to wash produce and cook other dishes as very little of this water is consumed.

Can I use the water for showering and bathing?

Perfluorinated compounds do not easily enter the body through the skin. Bathing, swimming and showering with water that has levels of these compounds above the health advisory values is safe as long as you avoid swallowing the water. Supervise small children when they are bathing and brushing teeth to ensure they do not swallow water.

Can I use the water for laundry?

Very little water remains on clothing and fabric that has been washed. Because these articles are not placed in your mouth, you may use water with perfluorinated compound levels above the health advisory for general cleaning and washing clothing, bedding and linens.

Can I use the water in a humidifier?

If the levels of perfluorinated compounds in your water are above the health advisory, use distilled or treated water in your humidifier.

Can my pets drink the water?

The health effects from perfluorinated compounds on animals are probably similar to the effects on people. If the levels of these compounds in your water are above the health advisory values or you are concerned about the health of your pet, use bottled or treated water for drinking and food preparation.

Can I use the water for my garden?

At this time, information on the levels of perfluorinated compounds in fruits and vegetables grown in home gardens is very limited. Levels of PFCs in produce are dependent on the levels in water and to a lesser degree, soil as well. Leafy vegetables, like lettuce and kale, and root crops, like potatoes and carrots, tend to take up more PFCs than fruit crops, like tomatoes and strawberries. Unless there are very high levels of PFCs in the water, consumption of vegetables from a home garden a few times per week is unlikely to significantly increase the risk of health effects.

Web resources

- **Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment:**
www.colorado.gov/cdphe/pfcs
- **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):**
www.epa.gov/chemical-research/perfluorinated-chemical-pfc-research
www.epa.gov/wqs-tech
- **Agency for Toxic Substances & Disease Registry:**
www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/index.html
- **Center for Disease Control:**
www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfc/index.html
www.cdc.gov/biomonitoring/PFCs_FactSheet.html