



TOWN OF BROOKLINE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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PFAS FACT SHEET



BACKGROUND

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of extremely persistent human-made chemical substances. Due to their inability to easily break down in the environment, they are often referred to as “forever chemicals”. As a result, levels of PFAS are commonly found in our water and our bloodstreams. Exposure to PFAS may occur through a variety of consumer products and have been associated with several adverse health outcomes.



EXPOSURE

It is possible to be exposed to PFAS through a variety of everyday PFAS containing consumer products. Some common sources of exposure are:

- Cosmetic and personal care products (makeup, shampoo, soaps, dental floss etc.)
- Non-stick cookware (Teflon)
- Grease resistant food packaging (to-go containers, fast food wrappers, pizza boxes, etc.)
- Waterproof and stain resistant fabrics
- Paints
- **Water supplies**—PFAS easily enters and accumulates in our water supplies when we rinse our faces of PFAS containing cosmetics, wash PFAS containing non-stick cookware, or wash PFAS containing fabrics. Because of this, exposure to PFAS through water ingestion is extremely common.



HEALTH RISKS

There is no proven safe level of PFAS. Laboratory testing has provided evidence for several negative health outcomes associated with PFAS exposure including:

- Decreased liver function
- Increased cholesterol levels
- Altered immune function
- Interference with the body's natural hormones
- Hypertension during pregnancy
- Decrease response to vaccines among children
- Delayed puberty



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Some alternatives and suggestions for limiting everyday PFAS exposure include:

- Bringing your own reusable to-go containers (limit PFAS exposure while limiting your single-use waste!)
- Avoid Teflon-based nonstick cookware
- Pop your own popcorn over the stove or pop loose kernels in a covered bowl or paper bag in the microwave (PFAS coats the inside of popcorn bags!)
- Look for PFAS free brands for household items such as dental floss, cleaning products, shampoo, cosmetics, cookware, and kitchen appliances