

PFAS in Drinking Water

What is PFAS?

- Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a family of manmade chemicals that have been widely used in consumer products.
- PFAS can make its way into drinking water from past industrial disposal or spills.
- You cannot see, taste, or smell PFAS in drinking water.
- Minnesota Department of Health is testing community water systems for PFAS.
- The only way to know if a private well has PFAS is to have it tested.

How can PFAS affect my health?

Consuming water with PFAS levels about health-based guidance values can increase risk of health effects such as:

- Higher cholesterol
- Changes to liver function
- Reduced immune response
- Thyroid disease
- Kidney and testicular cancer (for PFOA)



What level of PFAS in drinking water is safe?

MDH uses health-based values to evaluate health risks from individual PFAS. Health guidance values are designed to protect the most vulnerable populations for up to a lifetime of exposure. If more than one PFAS is found in drinking water, MDH evaluates their additive health risk using the Health Risk Index.

There is little to no health risk from drinking water with PFAS levels at or below guidance values. Drinking water with a PFAS Health Risk Index under one presents little to no health risk.

Drinking water with PFAS levels above guidance values or the Health Risk Index poses a potential health concern. It does not represent an immediate health risk. The guidance values are based on multiple safety factors and are overprotective for most people.

Community water systems with elevated PFAS can take actions to reduce PFAS levels. These systems can lower PFAS levels through treatment or reduced pumping from contaminated wells.

What are the PFAS levels in my drinking water?

To see PFAS testing results in community water systems, visit [Interactive Dashboard for PFAS Testing in Drinking Water](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/pfasmapp.html) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/water/pfasmapp.html>).

To learn more about testing private wells for PFAS, safe levels in drinking water, health effects, and ongoing activities, visit [Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl substances \(PFAS\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/hazardous/topics/pfcs.html) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/hazardous/topics/pfcs.html>).

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8/2022

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