Health Implications of Exposure to PFAS-Contaminated Drinking Water
PROPOSAL FOR A MULTI-SITE STUDY

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is funding research to study whether exposure to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) from drinking water might be a public health concern. The multi-site study will collect data on both exposure to PFAS and health outcomes from people who live in communities across the country that have used PFAS-contaminated private wells or public water systems. CDC anticipates enrolling 6,000 adults and 2,000 children combined from all participating sites. Up to six study sites will be selected. The study will take place from fall 2019 through fall 2024.

MDH Application for Funds to Establish a Study Site in Minnesota

MDH is applying for funds to establish a study site in the East Metro area of the Twin Cities. While MDH has been working with other state agencies, local agencies, and water operators to reduce PFAS drinking water exposures in East Metro communities since the contamination was first discovered, MDH recognizes that there is still more to learn about the potential health effects of exposures to these chemicals.

By participating in this research, MDH hopes to provide some answers to East Metro communities about potential health impacts. This research is also an important opportunity to contribute to scientific knowledge on these chemicals that may lead to additional public health actions to reduce exposures and any identified health risks in other communities impacted by PFAS-contaminated drinking water.

Local and Community Partners are Important

- MDH will work in partnership with the Washington County Department of Public Health and Environment to complete study activities.
- MDH will also work closely with local water system operators, other local government agencies, and community groups to conduct outreach about the study and determine the best ways to share study findings with the communities.
- A Community Advisory group representing a variety of stakeholders will be formed at the start of study planning and will continue to meet throughout the study period.

Study Application Information

The application to participate as a study site must be submitted to CDC by the end of May 2019.
How the study will be done

Participants will attend one study appointment. Later in the study, they will receive their individual test results along with information about how to interpret the results. MDH will follow up with participants as needed. Both MDH and CDC study staff will have access to participant’s individualized information and will take steps to protect their privacy to the fullest extent and as required by state and federal law.

- PFAS levels will be measured in blood and urine.
- These biomonitoring results will also be combined with other information, such as historical levels of PFAS in drinking water, to estimate participants’ exposure to PFAS in the past.
- Health outcomes data collected will include health indicators measured in blood and urine such as cholesterol levels and tests of liver, immune and thyroid function.
- Health information will also be gathered from participant questionnaires, which will ask about a number of health conditions.

Who is eligible for the study

Persons aged four years old or older are eligible to participate if they lived in a home that was served by the Oakdale or Cottage Grove public water system or a private well in the East Metro with detectible levels of PFOS and/or PFOA. Parents can enroll with their children. Persons with occupational exposure to PFAS or that have not been exposed to PFAS in drinking water in the past 15 years are not eligible. MDH will identify eligible households in the study area and send letters inviting residents to participate.

Contact for more information

For more information about MDH’s proposal to participate in the CDC multi-site study, please contact the following staff in the MDH Environmental Health Division:

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