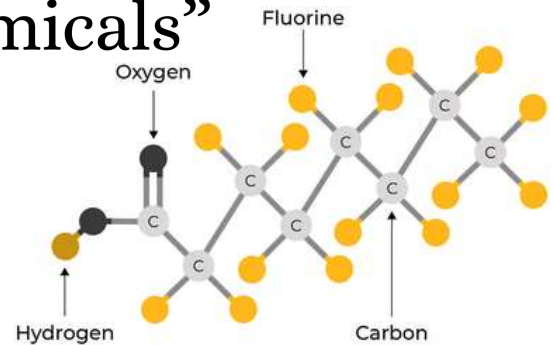


# PFAS: PolyEluoroAlkyL Substances the “Forever Chemicals”



## What is PFAS?

PFAS, short for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, are a large group of manufactured substances that do not occur naturally in the environment and are a class of chemicals that are used to make products grease-proof, waterproof, and stain resistant. Due to the fact that PFAS have been widely used since the 1940s, and that they are nearly indestructible, PFAS have been found both in the environment and in blood samples of people tested. PFAS chemicals have been dubbed “forever chemicals”, because they are extremely persistent, believed that they will last for thousands of years. According to the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, **Nearly every American tested has PFAS in their blood.**  
<https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/data-research/facts-stats/index.html>

## What is the problem with

PFAS?



### **PFAS can cause many serious health problems.**

Exposure to certain levels of some PFAS chemicals is linked to cancer and may increase risks for heart disease, birth defects, infertility, liver effects, low birth weights, hormonal imbalances, developmental delays, and higher-risk pregnancies. It is also linked to suppressed immune function.

## PFAS-free product certification

There is no regulation of PFAS-free labeling. However you can look for these labels:



Scan for a robust list of PFAS-free products



# How am I exposed to PFAS?

We can be exposed to PFAS through multiple sources:

- Drinking contaminated tap water
- Eating fish from polluted waters
- Consuming food packaged in grease-resistant wrappers (like fast food or microwave popcorn)
- Using nonstick cookware (e.g., Teflon pans)
- Wearing or handling water-resistant clothing and gear
- Using stain-resistant carpets, upholstery, or fabrics
- Applying certain cosmetics (like waterproof mascara or foundation)
- Using personal care products (e.g., dental floss, lotions with PFAS)
- Living near industrial sites or military bases
- Inhaling indoor dust from treated furniture or electronics

Image courtesy of the city of Riverside



Sources:

<https://www.epa.gov/pfas/pfas-explained>

<https://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/topics/agents/pfc>