

PFAS: THE FOREVER CHEMICALS

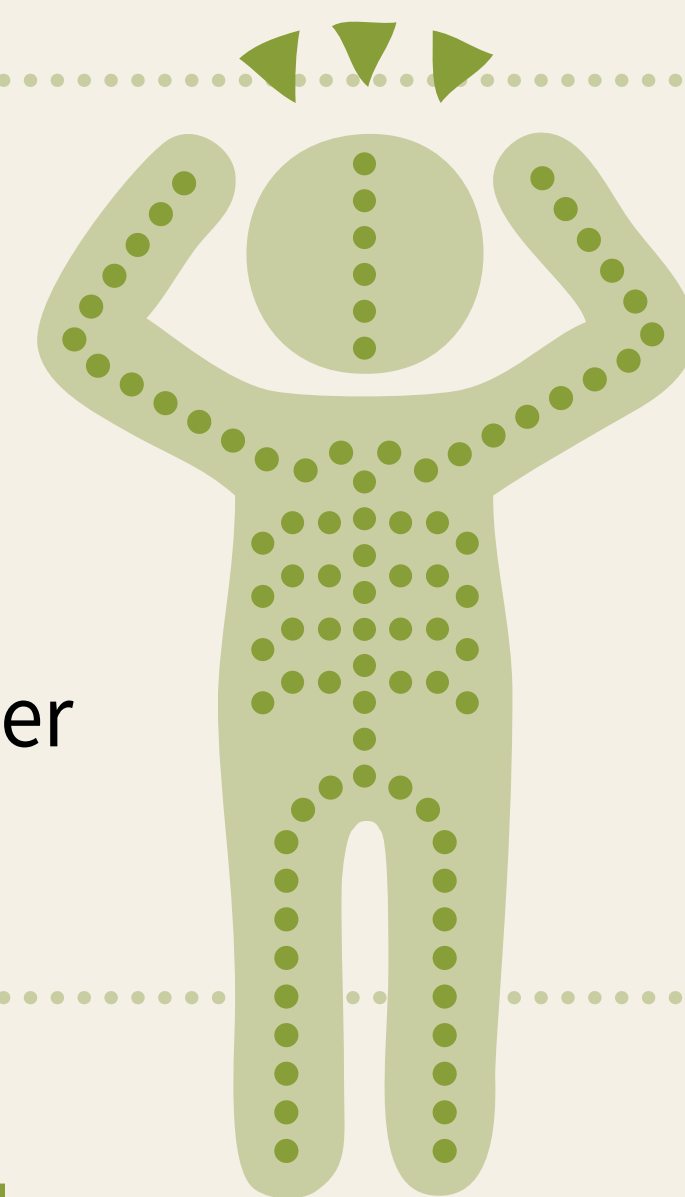
1. PFAS are a class of chemicals that are used to make products grease-proof, waterproof, and stain resistant.

They can be found in products such as firefighting foam, non-stick cookware and fabric. **These “forever” chemicals are extremely persistent.** They and their breakdown products last thousands of years or more.



2. PFAS can cause many serious health problems.

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



3. We are exposed to PFAS through multiple sources:

Drinking Water: Our water can become contaminated with PFAS by firefighting foam used at military bases, training centers and airports. Toxic waste from chemical companies and landfills can end up in our water.



Very few water utilities have the technology to filter out any PFAS chemicals once they enter the drinking water supply.

Food: PFAS can be found in non-stick cookware and in grease-proof food containers such as fast food wrappers, microwave popcorn bags, and pizza boxes.



Fabric: PFAS chemicals are added to clothing and furniture to make them waterproof and stain-resistant.



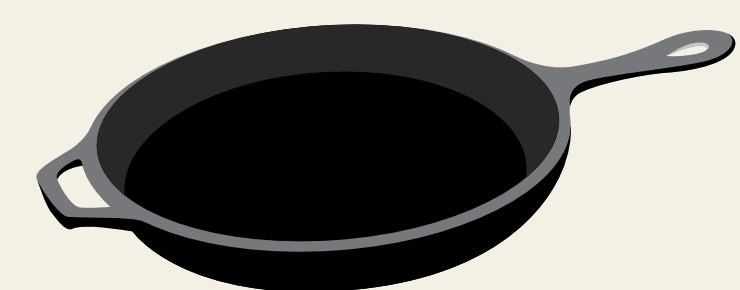
4. What can be done to stop PFAS exposure?

Manufacturers and businesses should **stop making the chemicals** and using them in their products wherever possible.

Consumers and residents **need to know** which factories make PFAS chemicals, which products contain them, and which water supplies are contaminated.



5. Tips for Consumers



Use stainless steel or cast-iron cookware.

Avoid takeout food packaging, or remove food from packaging as quickly as possible.

Avoid stain, water and oil-repellent products.



Ask your water supplier to test for PFAS.

For more information go to:

cleanwaterfund.org/features/pfas-forever-chemicals



This fact sheet was developed under a grant from the Toxics Use Reduction Institute at UMass Lowell.