

PFAS Frequently Asked Questions:

Is my water safe to drink?

The treated water supply from the City of Corinth Gas & Water Department continues to meet all water quality requirements established by the Mississippi State Department of Health. Drinking water with detections for trace levels of PFAS remains safe to drink.

The EPA's proposed Maximum Contaminant Levels for PFOA, PFOS, and the Hazard Index will not become final, established standards until public comment and scientific review processes are completed over the course of the next several months. After these processes are completed, the final drinking water standards issued by the EPA may differ from the proposed MCLs that have been announced. Once the final MCLs are announced, water providers will have time to address discoveries in their systems before the National Primary Drinking Water Regulations (NPDWR) become effective.

What if a customer has PFAS in their water? Can they use an in-home filter?

If a customer has concerns about their health, they can take steps to reduce their potential exposure to PFAS. NSF-certified filters containing activated carbon or reverse osmosis membranes have been shown to be effective at removing PFAS from water supplies. All water treatment units require regular maintenance to work properly. Water treatment units that are not properly maintained will lose their effectiveness over time.

Other types of common water treatment systems, such as water softeners, iron filtration, and ultraviolet light disinfection will not remove PFAS. Boiling water will not remove PFAS. While many homes have whole-house water softening or iron filtration systems, sampling data indicate that those systems do NOT remove PFAS.

There are both point-of-use (water is treated at one faucet or location) and point-of-entry (all the water in your home is treated) treatment options to reduce PFAS in drinking water. Point-of-use treatment tends to be more economical than point-of-entry. The following treatment options are effective at removing PFAS from drinking water when the unit is properly installed and maintained. However, they are not certified to remove PFAS at the MCLs and Hazard Index proposed by the EPA.

- Reverse osmosis uses energy to push water through a membrane with tiny pores. The membrane stops many contaminants while allowing water to pass through. Reverse osmosis is more practical as a point-of-use treatment option (not at point-of-entry) .
- Granular activated carbon filters accumulate contaminants on the filter while water passes through.
- Anion exchange resin systems use a chemical process to remove contaminants in water and wastewater. To remove the contaminants, their ions are exchanged with other ions that have a similar charge. There are some anion exchange resin systems that may remove PFAS, but be careful to ensure any system selected is certified to NSF/ANSI 53 (for filters) or NSF/ANSI 58 (reverse osmosis).

What do I do if I have been drinking water with PFAS?

As the EPA notes, current scientific research suggests that exposure to certain PFAS may lead to negative health outcomes. However, research is still ongoing to determine how different levels of exposure to different PFAS can lead to a variety of health effects.

If you believe you have been exposed to PFAS through your drinking water at levels that may impact your health, you are encouraged to talk to your doctor.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC)'s Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) provides a fact sheet to help people start conversations with their doctors about how PFAS can affect their health. It can be found at <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/Rfas/healtheffects/talk-to-your-doctor.html>.

Scientists at EPA, in other federal agencies, and in academia and industry are continuing to conduct and review the growing body of research about PFAS. However, health effects associated with exposure to PFAS are difficult to specify for many reasons, such as:

- There are thousands of PFAS with potentially varying effects and toxicity levels, yet most studies focus on a limited number of better-known PFAS compounds, such as PFOA and PFOS.

- People can be exposed to PFAS in different ways, such as industrial pollution and consumer product use, and at different stages of their life.
- The types and uses of PFAS change over time, which makes it challenging to track and assess how exposure to these chemicals occurs and how they will affect human health.

Can bottled water be used for PFAS-related discoveries?

EPA's interim health advisories for drinking water are set at levels that are below the current reliable detection abilities of scientific equipment. As a result, the EPA is not recommending bottled water to replace public drinking water at this time for PFAS discoveries above the health advisory levels.

EPA notes that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has not established standards for PFOA, PFOS, GenX chemicals, or PFBS in bottled water at this time, which means bottled water could have PFAS.

What are the health risks posed for sensitive populations?

As the EPA notes, current scientific research suggests that exposure to certain PFAS may lead to negative health outcomes. Research is still ongoing to determine how different levels of exposure to different PFAS can lead to a variety of negative health effects. Some people have higher exposure to PFAS than others because of their occupations or where they live. For example:

- Industrial workers who are involved in making or processing PFAS or PFAS-containing materials, or people who live or recreate near PFAS-producing facilities, may have greater exposure to PFAS.
- Pregnant and lactating women tend to drink more water per pound of body weight than the average person and as a result, they may have higher PFAS exposure compared to other people if it is present in their drinking water.

Because children are still developing, they may be more sensitive to the harmful effects of chemicals such as PFAS. They can also be exposed more than adults because:

- Children drink more water, eat more food, and breathe more air per pound of body weight than adults, which can increase their exposure to PFAS.
- Young children crawl on floors and put things in their mouths, which leads to a higher risk of exposure to PFAS in carpets, household dust, toys, and cleaning products.

Breast milk from mothers with PFAS in their blood and formula made with water containing PFAS can expose infants to PFAS, and it may also be possible for children to be exposed in utero during pregnancy. Scientists continue to do research in this area.

Based on current science, the benefits of breastfeeding appear to outweigh the risks for infants exposed to PFAS in breast milk. To weigh the risks and benefits of breastfeeding, mothers should contact their doctors.

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This information can be found on the EPA's website at: <https://www.epa.gov/gfas/our-current-understanding-human-health-and-environmental-risks-gfas>.

How can I reduce my exposure to PFAS?

- People who eat food cooked at home more often may have lower levels of PFAS in their blood than people who frequently eat out because PFAS has been found in burger wrappers, salad containers, and cookie bags. CR's experts suggest people transfer food out of the packaging and avoid reheating food in takeout containers. Avoiding microwave popcorn is recommended because the bags tend to have high levels of PFAS.
- PFAS are often found in stain- and water-resistant fabrics. Carpets, furniture, and clothing can all contain PFAS. When purchasing these products, favor retailers that have policies

restricting the use of PFAS.

- Recent research has shown that cosmetics frequently contain PFAS. Avoiding waterresistant products and products with PTFE or "fluoro-" in the ingredients can help limit exposure.
- Most nonstick cookware is made with PTFE, a type of PFAS. Consumers should consider a more traditional cast iron or carbon steel pan. CR's experts say that nonstick products are less likely to release PFAS if they are used properly. That means they should not be scraped with metal cooking utensils or abrasive cleaners, or be overheated while cooking.
- The air we breathe and water we drink can also contain PFAS, but you can still limit some exposure here. To avoid harmful chemicals in dust, Consumer Reports recommends using HEPA filters while vacuuming, dusting with wet cloths or a mop, and changing filters on your heating and cooling units as recommended.