

PFAS remediation in Drinking Water



The “forever chemicals” known as PFAS contaminate the drinking water and groundwater of more than 7,000 communities, affecting an estimated 200 million Americans. PFAS exposure has been linked with an increased risk of kidney, breast and testicular cancers, liver disease, thyroid disorders and other negative health outcomes. Many PFAS can linger in the body for decades. Simply drinking a glass of water from your kitchen tap may expose you to these toxic substances – but there are steps you can take to protect yourself and your family.



One way to reduce harmful forever chemicals in your home is to use a water filter rather than drink straight from the faucet.

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 or iron filtration systems, are not likely to 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

- 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 filter: Contaminants accumulate on the filter while water passes through.
- Ion Exchange Resins: Contaminants are attracted to the tiny beads of resin and they keep the materials from passing through the water system. There are some ion exchange resin systems that may remove PFAS, but be careful to ensure any system selected meets the NSF/ANSI certification standards listed below.

When purchasing home water treatment to address PFAS, look for products certified to NSF/ANSI 53 (for filters) or NSF/ANSI 58 (reverse osmosis). It's important to note that the current certification standards for PFAS filters (as of April 2024) do not yet indicate that a filter will remove PFAS down to the levels EPA has now set for a drinking water standard. EPA is working with standard-setting bodies to update their filter certifications to match EPA's new requirements. In the meantime, remember that reducing levels of PFAS in your water is an effective way to limit your exposure.

For more information reach out to:

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