PFAS Explained

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

EPA is committed to providing meaningful, understandable, and actionable information on per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances – known as PFAS – to the American public. The information provided here is intended to explain some of the important background information needed to understand the details of specific actions EPA takes to address PFAS, and other emerging events related to PFAS. It covers the following topics:

1. Our current understanding of the human health and environmental risks PFAS
2. Increasing our understanding of the health risks from PFAS and how to address them
3. Meaningful and achievable action steps that can be taken to reduce risk

What EPA Has Learned So Far

- PFAS are widely used, long lasting chemicals, components of which break down very slowly over time.
- Because of their widespread use and their persistence in the environment, many PFAS are found in the blood of people and animals all over the world and are present at low levels in a variety of food products and in the environment.
- PFAS are found in water, air, fish, and soil at locations across the nation and the globe.
- Scientific studies have shown that exposure to some PFAS in the environment may be linked to harmful health effects in humans and animals.
- There are thousands of PFAS chemicals, and they are found in many different consumer, commercial, and industrial products. This makes it challenging to study and assess the potential human health and environmental risks.
- Learn more about our current understanding of PFAS.

What We Don't Fully Understand Yet

- EPA's researchers and partners across the country are working hard to answer critical questions about PFAS:
    - How to better and more efficiently detect and measure PFAS in our air, water, soil, and fish and wildlife
    - How much people are exposed to PFAS
    - How harmful PFAS are to people and the environment
    - How to remove PFAS from drinking water
    - How to manage and dispose of PFAS
- This information will help EPA and state, local, and tribal partners make more informed decisions on how best to protect human health and the environment.
- Learn more about how we are increasing our understanding of the health risks of PFAS.