

# Washington State Action Levels for PFAS in Drinking Water

## WHEN AND HOW

### TO LOWER YOUR EXPOSURE TO PFAS IN DRINKING WATER:



 PFAS have been discovered above recommended federal and state safety levels in the drinking water supplies of millions of Americans, including in Washington State. Because it can take many years for our bodies to clear PFAS chemicals, exposure to levels above recommended limits could lead to harmful health effects.

 Washington State Action Levels (SALs) help you know when to take action to protect your health. If your tap water has PFAS above our SALs, take action to reduce PFAS in the water you drink and cook with.

 Limiting PFAS exposure is the best way to protect yourself and your family. The sooner you lower your PFAS exposure, the sooner your body can start clearing PFAS.

**Installing a PFAS-reducing water filter on your kitchen sink can help lower PFAS levels in your drinking and cooking water.**

**Follow the advice on the back page if PFAS levels in your drinking water are higher than our SALs.**

*Our SALs are based on the best available science, and may be updated as we get more information on PFAS health impacts.*

*Water tests from private labs sometimes give results with different measurements, or "units", than parts per trillion. Our SALs are shown here in these other common units.*

| PFAS CHEMICALS                                  | SAL in parts per trillion (ppt) | SAL in nanograms per liter (ng/L) | SAL in micrograms per liter (ug/l) | SAL in parts per billion (ppb) |
|---|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>PFOA</b><br>(perfluorooctanoic acid)         | 10 ppt                          | 10 ng/l                           | 0.010 ug/l                         | 0.010 ppb                      |
| <b>PFOS</b><br>(perfluorooctane sulfonic acid)  | 15 ppt                          | 15 ng/l                           | 0.015 ug/l                         | 0.015 ppb                      |
| <b>PFNA</b><br>(perfluorononanoic acid)         | 9 ppt                           | 9 ng/l                            | 0.009 ug/l                         | 0.009 ppb                      |
| <b>PFHXS</b><br>(perfluorohexane sulfonic acid) | 65 ppt                          | 65 ng/l                           | 0.065 ug/l                         | 0.065 ppb                      |
| <b>PFBS</b><br>(perfluorobutane sulfonic acid)  | 345 ppt                         | 345 ng/l                          | 0.345 ug/l                         | 0.345 ppb                      |

# Who should follow the State Action Levels (SALs) advice?

All people drinking water with PFAS above our SALs should act to lower their PFAS levels. This is especially important for sensitive groups, like pregnant people, people who may become pregnant, breastfeeding people and their infants, infants drinking formula mixed with tap water, and children under 5. These groups usually drink more water than most people, and are more vulnerable due to their life stage.

## Why should I reduce my exposure to PFAS?

There is strong evidence from animal studies and supporting evidence from human studies that PFAS can harm human health. For people, having higher PFAS levels in your body could: interfere with your immune system and make some vaccinations less effective, increase your risk for kidney cancer, high cholesterol, and lower birthweights. PFAS may also increase your risk for other cancers (like testicular cancer), thyroid disease, high blood pressure during pregnancy, and other reproductive issues.

Your risk of developing health problems depends on how much, how often, and how long you were exposed. Age, lifestyle, and overall health can impact how your body responds to PFAS exposure. The best way to protect yourself and your family is to lower your exposure.

## Point Of Use (POU) water filters can help lower PFAS levels

Some POU water filters can reduce PFAS. These filters often come in “Under the Sink” or “Countertop” styles. PFAS-reducing POU filters are usually granular activated carbon filters certified by the National Standards Federation to reduce PFOA and PFOS (NSF/ANSI Standard 53, must include claim of PFOA/PFOS reduction), or reverse osmosis filters. See our factsheet (<https://doh.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-10/331-699.pdf>) for help deciding which type best fits your needs and how to find a filter.



“Under the Sink” Style Filter



“Countertop” Style Filter

## A note on watering your garden and livestock

We're still learning what PFAS levels are safe for watering gardens and livestock. We know plants can soak up certain PFAS from soil and irrigation water. How much PFAS exposure you get from eating PFAS-contaminated plants depends on soil condition, the type of plant, the type of PFAS, and PFAS levels in the soil and water. We also know that farm animals who drink PFAS can pass the PFAS into their eggs and milk, or meat. There are no regulations or guidelines for eating plants and animal products contaminated with PFAS.

If you are concerned, consider filtering water used for gardening and livestock. For gardening, we recommend you:

- Wash or scrub all dirt off produce before eating to avoid swallowing soil.
- Peel and wash all root vegetables before eating.
- Use rainwater for garden irrigation.
- Add clean compost to your garden soil. Increasing the organic content of your garden soil can reduce the amount of PFAS your plants pick up from the soil.

For a list of certified PFAS water-testing labs, visit <https://doh.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-09/221-700.pdf>

For a more information on PFAS, visit <https://doh.wa.gov/community-and-environment/contaminants/pfas>



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