



# Prescriptions for PREVENTION



Guidance from the Western States  
Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit

## PFAS (Per- or poly-fluoroalkyl substances)



### Did you know?

The PFAS group of thousands of chemicals have been used for non-stick coatings, and stain/water resistant fabrics since the 1940s. Exposure to PFAS chemicals is common and most people are exposed via contaminated food or drinking water and some “waterproof” or “stain proof” products. PFAS are sometimes called “forever chemicals” because they stay in our environment and our bodies for a long time. Kids with higher PFAS exposures are more likely to have cholesterol problems and decreased growth as babies.

### Do

- ✓ **Ask your water provider** if they have PFAS testing levels, or test your own well if you use well water.
- ✓ **Here's a map** where PFAS investigations are being done by the CDC.
- ✓ **Some states** also have PFAS testing data available online.
- ✓ **Check your Consumer Confidence Report** on water.
- ✓ **Consider using a filter** certified to reduce PFAS levels. Find our more about [PFOA/PFOS in drinking water here](#):
  - ✓ Boiling water does not reduce PFAS. Many water filters don't either. Be sure to select a filter certified to decrease PFAS.
  - ✓ If levels are above 0.004 parts per trillion (ppt) for PFOA or 0.02 ppt for PFOS, consider using an alternate source of water if you're not able to use a PFAS-certified filter.

### Don't

- ✗ **Don't use takeout containers** or grease-resistant paper to store food (transfer to reusable containers made of glass, ceramics or stainless steel as soon as possible).
- ✗ **Don't buy:**
  - **Stain-resistant carpets** or furniture (these coatings usually have lots of PFAS);
  - **“Stain resistant”, “water repellent” or “dirt repellent” clothing or shoes**, unless these are necessary for safety and no alternative is available;
  - **Cookware** with non-stick coatings;
  - **Personal care products** (skin products, hair products etc) that have ingredients that contain “fluoro” or PTFE (ex. “Waterproof” makeup);
  - **Coated dental floss**, get the uncoated kind.
- ✗ **Avoid applying waterproofing sprays** or treatments that contain PFAS.



For more information, scan the code or visit [wspehsu.ucsf.edu/prescriptions-for-prevention-environmental-hazards](https://wspehsu.ucsf.edu/prescriptions-for-prevention-environmental-hazards)