Dear Trusted Healthcare Professional,

There are numerous exposure sources of PFAS in the everyday products my family and I often encounter which can include contaminated drinking water, cookware, food containers, clothing and plastics. Some communities experience elevated exposure to PFAS through their water supply or their occupations.

As your patient, I want you to talk to me and other patients about how we might be exposed to PFAS and ways we can reduce our PFAS exposure. Current recommendations by ATSDR and NASEM include blood testing for certain PFAS. I'd like to know if I should have blood testing for PFAS and receive any additional health screenings.

My family and community are experiencing uncertainty around these environmental exposures. I am concerned that my family and I will experience negative health outcomes from PFAS exposure. Please help me protect my family and I from the health impacts of PFAS exposure.

Thank you for the care you provide to me.

Sincerely,

Concerned Patient

Learn More

Resources for healthcare providers and the public to learn more about PFAS and how to assess for and reduce exposures.

Alliance of Nurses for Health Environments' PFAS Guidance for Clinicians

Environmental Working Group's PFAS Pollution in Public and Private Water Systems Interactive Map

Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units: PEHSUs across the country are ready and able to assist health professionals and families with their PFAS questions and concerns. You can speak with an expert free of charge.

PFAS-Exchange part of PFAS-REACH: An online resource center about PFAS contaminants in drinking water.

For informational guides on water filters:

Consumer Reports: "How to Get PFAS Out of Your Drinking Water"

EWG Guide: "Getting 'forever chemicals' out of drinking water: EWG's guide to PFAS water filters"

Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments

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Speaking to your healthcare provider about exposures to Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)

A resource to learn more about PFAS, potential exposure sources, and how to talk with your healthcare provider about concerns relating to exposure.

What are Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)?

PFAS are a group of over 14,000 chemicals used in many consumer products. PFAS can be harmful because they do not break down in the environment, certain PFAS can accumulate in the human body over time, and PFAS are considered endocrine disruptors.

How people are exposed to PFAS:

- Eating foods grown using contaminated water or soil or through eating foods packaged with PFAS materials.
- Drinking contaminated water: common sources of contamination occur near manufacturing, airports and military sites, and/or landfills.
- Working in an industrial facility where PFAS chemicals were produced or used or where occupational exposure risk is high.
- Children can be exposed through hand-to-mouth behaviors with contaminated surfaces. Infants can be exposed through mixing formula with contaminated tap water.
- Some PFAS have been shown to cross the placenta. Breast milk can be a source of exposure. NASEM's clinical guidance states breastfeeding outweighs the risks.

NASEM's clinical guidance does not provide pediatric recommendations which can create added anxiety and stress for caregivers of young children. Until more information is available, providing compassionate, patient-centered recommendations are encouraged along with providing educational resources to limit exposures to PFAS as a precautionary measure.

Assessing for elevated risk

While most people in the United States have measurable amounts of PFAS in their blood, some populations have more exposure to PFAS than others. In order to appropriately assess for risk, healthcare providers should:

- Review local, soil, fish and wildlife advisories in your area. Note any areas with documented PFAS contamination.
- Become familiar with your area's annual drinking water quality reports. The US EPA established PFAS drinking water standards in April 2024.
- Check PFAS Project Lab and Environmental Working Group databases to see if your community is listed as a known and/or suspected PFAS contamination site.
- If there is potential for elevated risk or a patient is expressing concern from exposure, utilize the Exposure Assessment Questionnaire to determine level of PFAS exposure.

Exposures to certain PFAS are detected through blood testing. Healthcare providers can utilize the ANHE PFAS toolkit for testing guidance.

Working together

Patients may have concerns including potential future health problems, pregnancy, fertility, breastfeeding and immunity. Healthcare providers should work with their patients to develop a tailored plan based on individual needs and medical history.

Health Impacts of PFAS

IIt is important to have ongoing conversations with concerned patients as new PFAS science continues to emerge. We do know that when PFAS exposure is reduced, risk is decreased. There is evidence showing the following potential health impacts of PFAS exposure:

In adults:	increased risk of kidney and testicular cancer, breast cancer, ulcerative colitis and thyroid disease and dysfunction
In adults & children:	decreased antibody response, dyslipidemia/ increased cholesterol levels, and liver enzyme alterations
In infants:	low birth weight/ decreased infant and fetal growth
In pregnant people:	pre-eclampsia

The National Academy of Medicine released recommendations for care of those exposed to PFAS. Here are some recommended actions that you can share with a healthcare provider to determine a screening and follow-up plan.

For those with elevated PFAS levels identified through blood testing, follow-up to consider includes:

- Regular examinations for testicular cancer
- Screening for breast cancer
- Screening for ulcerative colitis
- Blood pressure monitoring during pregnancy
- Blood lab tests including lipid panels, liver function tests, serum creatinine and urinalysis and thyroid tests