

## How do I know if my private water system has PFAS?

Laboratory testing is the only way to know if a private water system has per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). PFAS are in many everyday items, including water- or stain-resistant fabrics in your home and clothing, personal hygiene products, and food and beverage packaging. Because of that, it is difficult to collect a water sample without contaminating it; therefore, it is recommended that water samples be collected by someone trained to sample drinking water for PFAS analysis.

The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) have identified a list of companies that provide the service of collecting water samples for PFAS. Neither ODH nor Ohio EPA endorse any of the vendors on the list; consumers are advised to research any services they may obtain from these companies as well as the full cost of sample collection and analysis. The list can be found [here](#).

Companies that provide water sample collection for PFAS testing have relationships with laboratories that are certified to perform the U.S. EPA Method 537.1 or U.S. EPA Method 533 analysis. These companies will follow a certified laboratory's process and shipping requirements and provide sample results.

## What labs can test for PFAS?

It is important to use a laboratory that is certified by the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC), United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), or accepted by Ohio EPA to test for PFAS to ensure that sample results are accurate.

U.S. EPA currently has two published laboratory methods available to test drinking water for PFAS:

- |                         |                           |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| • U.S. EPA Method 537.1 | • U.S. EPA Method 533     |
| ◦ Published June 2020   | ◦ Published December 2019 |
| ◦ 18 individual PFAS    | ◦ 25 individual PFAS      |

A list of accepted labs that will work directly with an individual resident to complete drinking water testing for PFAS using U.S. EPA Method 537.1 or U.S. EPA Method 533 can be found [here](#).

Water sample results will be provided in a report several weeks after the sample is collected. For additional information see the factsheet [PFAS – How to Read a PFAS Lab Report](#).

## What are Ohio's drinking water standards for PFAS?

U.S. EPA recently finalized the National Primary Drinking Water Regulation (NPDWR) to establish legally enforceable levels, called Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs), for six PFAS in drinking water. U.S. EPA also established health-based, non-enforceable Maximum Contaminant Level Goals (MCLGs) for these six PFAS. Ohio has adopted these levels. Public water systems and bottled water manufacturers are expected to meet these MCLs. Private water systems are not required to test or treat for PFAS; however, residents are encouraged to test their wells. These levels are used as thresholds in guiding residents on health effects, ways to reduce exposures, and options for treating drinking water.

PFAS <sup>1</sup>	MCLG	MCL (Enforceable Levels)
PFOA	Zero	4.0 parts per trillion (ppt) (also expressed as ng/L)
PFOS	Zero	4.0 ppt
PFHxS	10 ppt	10 ppt
PFNA	10 ppt	10 ppt
GenX	10 ppt	10 ppt
Mixtures containing two or more of PFHxS, PFNA, GenX, and PFBS <sup>2</sup>	1 (unitless) Hazard Index (HI)	1 (unitless) HI

MCL - Maximum contaminant level

MCLG - Maximum contaminant level goal

<sup>1</sup> PFOA (Perfluorooctanoic acid); PFOS (Perfluorooctane sulfonate); GenX (HFPO dimer acid); PFBS (Perfluorobutanesulfonic acid); PFHxS (Perfluorohexane sulfonic acid); and PFNA (Perfluorononanoic acid).

<sup>2</sup> PFBS health-based value used to calculate the HI is 2000 ppt. The MCLs for PFHxS, PFNA, and GenX will be used to calculate the HI.

The hazard index (HI) is a commonly used approach for assessing exposures to mixtures. A ratio called a hazard quotient (HQ) is calculated for each of the four PFAS (PFHxS, GenX, PFNA, and PFBS) by dividing the measured level of each of the four PFAS in the drinking water by the MCL or a health-based value. The individual PFAS ratios (HQs) are then added together to calculate the HI. If the HI is greater than one (1.0), then the drinking water contains PFAS higher than the MCL and is a potential health risk.

Compare the testing results to the standards above to make informed decisions on whether to install treatment equipment to reduce the PFAS in the water or use an alternative water source (such as bottled water). If you have health concerns about the PFAS levels in your drinking water, consult with your healthcare provider. Please see the fact sheets [PFAS – Whole House Water Treatment](#) and [PFAS - Point of Use Water Treatment](#) for additional information about water treatment which can be found on the [Ohio PFAS webpage](#).

## For more information:

For more information on PFAS, including the health effects of PFAS, PFAS in drinking water, water testing and treatment, and other PFAS activities in Ohio, visit the [Ohio PFAS webpage](#).

For more information on PFAS and your health, contact the ODH Health Assessment Section at [BEH@odh.ohio.gov](mailto:BEH@odh.ohio.gov) or (614) 728-9452.

If you have any questions about water testing and treatment, contact the ODH Residential Water and Sewage Program at [privatewater@odh.ohio.gov](mailto:privatewater@odh.ohio.gov) or (614) 644-7558.