

PFAS AND DRINKING WATER: CHOOSING A FILTER



PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) are a group of persistent, industrial chemicals released into the environment through spills and waste products. Contaminated drinking water is one of the main ways people are exposed to PFAS.

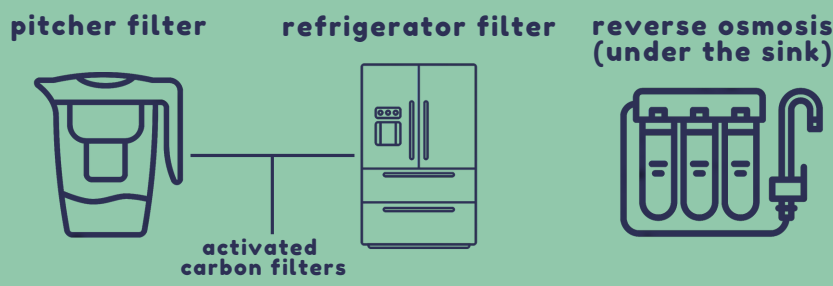


Some PFAS can stay in people's bodies for a long time. Health effects of PFAS are not fully understood, but they have been linked to some cancers, high cholesterol, and developmental and reproductive health concerns.

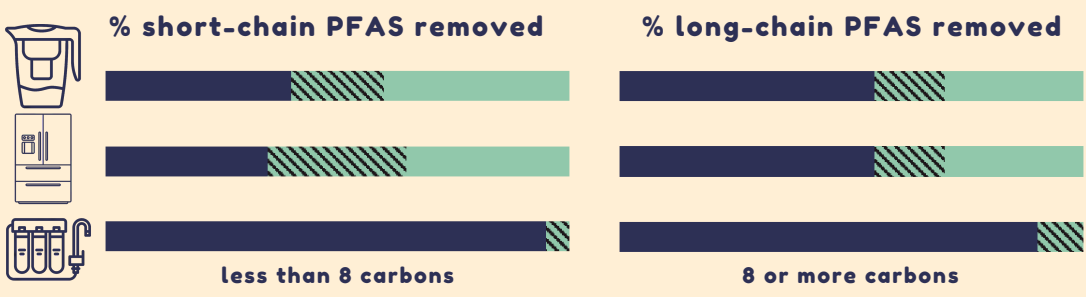
What you can do: Filter your drinking water

No filters will remove all PFAS from your water, but with regular maintenance, ANY filter will be better than no filter at all.

Contaminated drinking water poses the greatest exposure concern. Filtering water from kitchen taps and/or your refrigerator, and changing filters on the recommended schedule, can help reduce exposure.



Some filters perform better than others...



Filters are better at removing "long-chain" PFAS (larger compounds) than "short-chain" PFAS

Reverse osmosis performs better than activated carbon filters

■ % removed ■ % left over

...but they cost more to buy and maintain

(approximate costs*)

	pitcher filter	refrigerator filter	reverse osmosis (under the sink)
up-front cost	\$20+	comes with fridge (\$0)	do it yourself: \$200+ professional help: \$1,000
annual maintenance	\$50+	\$80+	\$80+ (DIY) / \$275 (professional)

Regular maintenance is important

The best way to limit PFAS exposure in your drinking water is by replacing filters and other parts using the schedule recommended by the manufacturer



Data Sources

Herkert, N., et al. 2020. Assessing the Effectiveness of Point-of-Use Residential Drinking Water Filters for Perfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS). Environmental Science & Technology Letters. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1021/acs.estlett.0c00004>

Knappe, D. 2018. "How do fluorochemicals get into our drinking water, and how can we get them out?" http://mleead.umich.edu/files/UMPFASWebinar_20180516_Knappe_HowDoFluorochemicals.pdf

* Cost assumptions: filter replacement every 6 months



Water filter images all from The Noun Project
Water pitcher - Ben Davis
Fridge - DAVIVONGSA PATHRPOL
Reverse Osmosis - lastspark