

# Frequently Asked Questions about PFAS

## What are PFAS? (Pronounced pea-fass)

Polyfluoroalkyl substances—known as PFAS—are long lasting chemicals whose components break down very slowly over time. Because of this, PFAS can build up in people, animals, and the environment over time. PFAS are sometimes called forever chemicals.

They have been used in consumer products since the 1940s because of their useful properties.

## Here are a few:

- Cosmetics
- Shampoo, conditioner, lotion, and soap
- Dishwasher detergent and laundry detergent
- Food packaging like microwave popcorn bags or pizza boxes
- Non-stick cookware (Teflon)
- Water-repellent fabrics for outdoor gear like tents or camping equipment

## Should Greeley residents be concerned about PFAS?

Greeley residents can be confident knowing that Greeley's Water Department can treat and remove low-level PFAS that may be found in our drinking water supplies.

We continue to monitor through routine sampling even though Greeley's chance of having a high-level detection of a PFAS is extremely low. The source water entering our two treatment plants comes from snow melt, and our watershed is free of any known high-level concentration of PFAS coming from industrial sources. Greeley will start testing its source water for PFAS in 2024.

## The EPA is proposing a new federal standard to regulate PFAS. What is Greeley Water's response?

1. The City of Greeley's **first priority** is the health of our community.
  - a. Our certified water treatment operators, water quality staff and leadership place the highest priority on protecting the health and safety of people who live, work, and visit here.
2. The City of Greeley is **closely monitoring all state and EPA regulations** for drinking water, but we go above and beyond to ensure our water quality is the best it can be.
  - a. We are researching the new science regarding PFAS in water.
3. The City of Greeley **conducts water quality tests** that detect PFAS.
  - a. Test results will be shared with the public in the Water Department's annual Consumer Confidence Report.
  - b. We have sampled for PFAS in the past and have also participated in a voluntary study; PFAS has not yet been detected in the drinking water coming from our treatment plants.
4. What will the city do **if it detects PFAS**?
  - a. We are looking at options, such as budgeting for treatment, if necessary
  - b. We have the technology to remove PFAS using activated carbon at both plants.

### How can people be exposed to PFAS?

Most people in the U.S. have been exposed to some PFAS due to their **widespread production** and use in consumer products. **Most exposures are low**, but some can be high if a person is around a concentrated source for a long time.

#### Here are some other ways:

- Working as a firefighter or around the manufacturing and processing of chemicals.
- Drinking water contaminated with PFAS
- Eating certain foods that may contain PFAS, including fish.
- Swallowing contaminated oil or dust
- Breathing air containing PFAS
- Using products made with PFAS or that are packaged in materials containing PFAS
- PFAS have been detected in rain

### How can PFAS affect a person's health?

- Decreased fertility or increased high blood pressure in pregnant women
- Developmental effects or delays in children
- Increased risk of some cancers
- Reduced ability of the body's immune system to fight infections

### What would the proposed rule require public water utilities to do?

- Monitor water for these PFAS
- Notify the public of any PFAS levels found in testing
- Reduce the levels of these PFAS in drinking water if they exceed the proposed standards
- In December 2026: Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) become enforceable standards for Drinking Water Utilities

### Where can I find more information about PFAS?

Go to [www.epa.gov/pfas](http://www.epa.gov/pfas)