

# Talking to your health care provider

PFAS are a family of human-made chemicals found in some firefighting foam and many other products. These chemicals exist throughout our environment and are associated with certain health impacts.

If you are concerned about how PFAS may affect your health, talk to your health care provider.



## Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding has many benefits for both mother and baby, but PFAS pass into breastmilk. You may wonder how breastfeeding will affect your baby.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Academy of Pediatrics say people should continue to breastfeed even when there might be contaminants such as PFAS in their environment.



Discuss your concerns with your provider, and learn how to reduce your PFAS exposure.

## More information

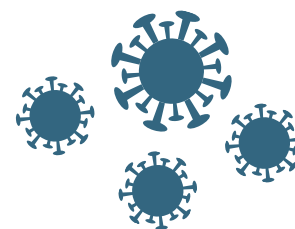
- Reducing your exposure: [cdphe.colorado.gov/pfas-health](https://cdphe.colorado.gov/pfas-health)
- Breastfeeding: [bit.ly/pfas-breastfeeding](https://bit.ly/pfas-breastfeeding)
- Blood testing: [bit.ly/pfas-blood](https://bit.ly/pfas-blood)

## General information to share with your provider

- Many people have these chemicals in their drinking water.
- PFAS can build up in people and animals.
- Almost everyone in the United States has some level of the chemicals in their body.
- They are nicknamed “forever chemicals” because they stay in the environment for a very long time and in people for decades.

## There is increasing evidence about how PFAS impact health.

- There is strong evidence that two of the chemicals PFOA and PFOS:
  - > Impact the immune system.
  - > Decrease infant birth weight.
  - > Cause changes in liver function.
  - > Increase cholesterol.
- There is moderate evidence that PFAS are associated with preeclampsia and high blood pressure during pregnancy, and effects on thyroid hormones.
- There is also evidence that PFOA increases the risk of kidney and testicular cancer.






## Questions? Contact ToxCall

303-692-2606 | [cdphe\\_toxcall@state.co.us](mailto:cdphe_toxcall@state.co.us)

## Discuss your health history with your provider

Discuss your specific concerns about PFAS and your health with your providers. Tell them about risk factors you may have such as your family history or lifestyle. Based on your specific case, your health care provider may recommend further tests.

HEALTH IMPACT	WHAT TO DISCUSS WITH YOUR PROVIDER
High cholesterol	Blood test with a lipid panel (cholesterol, LDL, HDL, triglycerides).
Liver damage	A liver function blood test to look for changes in liver enzymes.
 Less effective vaccines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Your and your child’s vaccine schedules to ensure you are up to date with all recommended vaccines.</li> <li>&gt; An antibody titer to determine if antibody levels are in the normal range.</li> </ul>
Changes in thyroid hormones	A thyroid test to look for changes in thyroid hormones. This may be more important if you are pregnant.
Kidney cancer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; A blood/urine test to measure serum creatinine, urine protein, and urine albumin.</li> <li>&gt; Ways to decrease your cancer risk in general.</li> </ul>
Testicular cancer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Regular testicular examinations.</li> <li>&gt; How to decrease your cancer risk in general.</li> </ul>
Pregnancy concerns such as high blood pressure and low infant birth weigh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Your prenatal care schedule.</li> <li>&gt; Home blood pressure monitoring during pregnancy.</li> <li>&gt; Other ways to ensure the healthiest outcome.</li> </ul> 

 If you don’t have insurance or a health care provider, we encourage you to apply for Health First Colorado (Colorado’s Medicaid Program) or the Child Health Plan Plus (CHP+). Visit [healthfirstcolorado.com](http://healthfirstcolorado.com)

### Blood testing

If you are interested in getting a blood test for PFAS, ask your health care provider:

**What will the test tell you?** Testing can tell if a person’s blood PFAS level is lower than, the same as, or higher than the blood levels of other people living in the U.S. It cannot show whether PFAS caused a person’s health problem. The test also would not determine treatment or next steps.

**Will your insurance cover the blood test?** Blood tests for PFAS can be expensive and may not be covered.

**Can your health care provider order the blood test for you?** Depending on what lab your health care provider uses, you may have to order your own blood test.



**Are at-home tests an option?** At-home blood tests for PFAS are available. If you decide to use one, keep in mind that they have the same limitations as tests ordered by a health care provider or obtained at a lab.