
FIRE DEPARTMENT SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Bulletin #35, PFAS Blood Testing for Firefighters, September 3, 2021

Because firefighters have been occupationally exposed more to PFAS than the general population, knowing their PFAS blood levels can help in the study of this important issue. The National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) has been measuring PFAS in American's blood since 1999.¹ "NHANES is a program of studies designed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to evaluate the health and nutrition of adults and children in the United States."²

Health effects which have been linked to some PFAS include:

- Changed immune response
- Increased cholesterol levels
- Increased chance of cancer, especially kidney and testicular cancers
- Increased chance of thyroid disease³

"PFAS blood test results can only tell you the amount of PFAS in your blood at the time of the test. The test will not tell you if PFAS has affected your health or if it will in the future. PFAS blood testing is not a routine test. If you have been exposed to high amounts of PFAS and want or need to know the amount of PFAS in your blood, talk to your doctor."⁴

But, "Knowing PFAS blood levels helps to establish baseline exposure levels...Baseline testing could also lead to more definitive answers to health questions in the future. Currently, there is no established treatment for PFAS exposure."⁵ The Foam Exposure Committee recommends that you know your PFAS blood levels.

1 PFAS in the U.S. Population <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/health-effects/us-population.html>

2 *ibid.*

3 PFAS Community Campaign, April 28, 2020, <https://cswab.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Fact-Sheet-Medical-Testing-PFAS-Community-Campaign-FINAL-28-April-2020.pdf>

4 Michigan Department Health & Human Services, [PFAS Exposure and Your Health, April 2019.](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/pfasresponse/2019-4-23_PFAS_Exposure_and_Your_Health_-_APPROVED_WEB_653460_7.pdf)
https://www.michigan.gov/documents/pfasresponse/2019-4-23_PFAS_Exposure_and_Your_Health_-_APPROVED_WEB_653460_7.pdf

5 *ibid.*

Foam Exposure Committee

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The PROBLEMS with PFAS



HOW DOES IT GET INTO OUR BODIES?



Cooking with nonstick pans



Products containing PFAS



PFAS-contaminated food and water



PFAS in air and dust



PFAS

- Short for **per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances**, chemicals used in products such as non-stick cookware, food packaging, water-resistant clothing, and stain-resistant carpeting
- Also called '**forever chemicals**' they can take up to 1,000 years to break down in nature



HEALTH PROBLEMS LINKED TO PFAS

Kidney and testicular cancer

High blood pressure and pre-eclampsia

Higher cholesterol

Lower infant birth weights

Decreased vaccine response in children

WHAT CAN WE DO?



INDIVIDUALS - **avoid products with PFAS** and ask policymakers to limit or ban its use

HEALTH PROFESSIONALS - **advise patients on how to avoid PFAS** and support limits on its use

BUSINESSES - **phase out use of PFAS** and avoid non-essential uses

POLICYMAKERS - **limit or ban PFAS**

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