What Should I Do if PFAS Are Detected in My Private Well?

Environmental & Occupational Health Assessment Program • February 2018

Background

This fact sheet is written for people whose well has been tested and found to have a detection of Per-and Polyfluoroalkly Substances (PFAS). It is a companion to the October 2017 CT DPH fact sheet PFAS in Drinking Water. In the October 2017 fact sheet we describe the chemicals, health effects and the Action Level of 70 parts per trillion (ppt) or 70 nanograms/ liter (70 ng/L) for the sum of certain PFAS in drinking water.

Can I Drink the Water?

This depends upon the levels found in your water. The following chart is a guide to interpreting test results. The key point is that you should stop drinking the water if the sum of the 5 targeted PFAS [Perfluorooctanoic Acid (PFOA), Perfluorooctane Sulfonate (PFOS), Perfluorohexane Sulfonate (PFHxS), Perfluorononanoic Acid (PFNA), and Perfluoroheptanoic Acid (PFHpA)] is above 70 ppt, and you should avoid bathing and showering in the water if this sum is above 210 ppt.

Understanding PFAS Test Results[1]

Test Result	Can I Drink the Water?	Can I bathe or shower in the water?	How to Address the Problem
> 210 ppt	No	No	Whole house filter or connect to public water
70 to 210 ppt	No	Yes	Bottled water, whole house filter, point of use filter, or connect to public water
20 to 70 ppt	Yes	Yes	Retest, consider point of use filter to minimize exposure
< 20 ppt	Yes	Yes	No further action

[1]The levels in the first column refer to the sum of 5 PFAS: PFOS, PFOA, PFNA, PFHxS and PFHpA.

Detections below 70 ppt are unlikely to be a health risk. However, there is ongoing research into PFAS health effects and it is known to accumulate in the body. Further, at levels between 20 and 70 ppt future testing is recommended to ensure that the levels are not increasing. Therefore, at these levels you may consider installing a point of use filter to minimize your exposure and need for future testing.

Connecticut Department of Public Health
PO Box 340308, Hartford, CT 06134-0308
http://www.ct.gov/dph

Who Should I Inform of My Result?

Any PFAS detections should be reported to your local health department. They can determine if your results should be referred to CT DEEP or CT DPH for further evaluation. If your well testing was organized by your local health department or a state agency, they will automatically be made aware of your result.

What Kind of Treatment Should I Install?

There are two treatment types generally considered effective at reducing PFAS from residential private well water; granular activated carbon (GAC) and reverse osmosis (RO). GAC is generally more appropriate when you need to treat all the water in your home (whole house filter) but could also be used to treat water at a single tap such as your kitchen faucet. RO is most commonly and practically used to treat water at your kitchen tap.

There are treatment devices certified by a third party organization for reducing PFAS in residential drinking water. To find products certified for reducing PFAS, please refer to the NSF International certification listings on their website (http://info.nsf.org/Certified/DWTU/) or call NSF International's consumer information specialist at 1-800-673-8010.

Should I Retest My Water?

As the table on page 1 shows, if PFAS are detected in your private well water at a concentration between 20 and 70 ppt, we recommend that you retest your water to determine if levels have changed. If a treatment device was installed to address PFAS, we recommend that you also test your treated water to verify that the treatment device is effectively reducing PFAS levels in your water. Please refer to the EPA Approved UCMR3 Labs Registered in CT for Testing Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances in Drinking Water for a list of labs that test for PFAS.

Is Connecting to Public Water an Option?

If a public water system is available in your area, you may want to consider connecting as a long-term corrective solution. To find out if a public water supply system is available to your area, refer to the CT DPH Public Water Supply Map. If this option is not available or is not practical, water treatment (see above) may be the quickest way to address PFAS exceedances.

For More Information On:

Questions About Drinking from Private Wells and Treatment Options:
DPH **Private Well Program**: 860-509-8401

Questions About PFAS Health Effects:
DPH **Environmental & Occupational Health Assessment Program**: (860) 509-7740

Questions on PFAS Sources:
DEEP **Remediation Division**: 860-424-3705

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