



NC Department of Health and Human Services

Communications with Citizens Impacted by PFAS Contamination

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DHHS Role

- **Help address concerns related to health impacts related to PFAS exposures**
- **We also help to**
 - **Listen to all concerns raised by residents**
 - **Explain the various actions to the PFAS issue**
 - **Direct people to correct resources**

Quantifying Communications

- **Approximately 10-20 individual calls per week related to PFAS/GenX/Chemours**
- **Conversations last anywhere from five minutes to over an hour**

Common Questions

Need Basic Information

- **Who is responsible?**
 - **The Chemours facility, although there are also other sources of PFAS in our environment**
- **What is the concern?**
 - **PFAS chemicals released into environment have known and potential health impacts**
- **When did this start?**
 - **Since the late 1970s/early 1980s**
- **Where are PFAS found?**
 - **Everywhere, although large areas of southeastern NC are heavily impacted**
- **How can I be exposed?**
 - **Contaminated drinking water, emissions (now controlled), etc.**

How does (insert specific PFAS) impact me/my family?

- Often impossible to answer
- Can direct impacted individuals to our clinician memo



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

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September 15, 2022

TO: North Carolina Clinicians
FROM: Zack Moore, MD, MPH, State Epidemiologist
SUBJECT: **Updated Guidance for Clinicians with Patients Concerned about Exposures to Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)**

Since 2017, the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) has been responding to public health concerns about GenX and other chemicals known as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). The NCDHHS Occupational and Environmental Epidemiology Branch developed this memo to provide PFAS information and educational materials to clinicians in affected communities to help them address patient concerns, including:

- What are PFAS?
- How can I be exposed?
- What are the health effects?
- How can I measure PFAS in my blood, and what does that mean?

PFAS Basics

PFAS are a large group of man-made chemicals that have been used in industry and consumer products worldwide since the 1950s. These chemicals are used to make products that resist stains, water, and grease and have been used in furniture, cookware, fast food packaging and fire-fighting foam. PFAS are found in water, people, and wildlife all over the world. Most PFAS do not break down easily in the environment and can stay in people's bodies a long time.

There are several ways that one can be exposed to PFAS. Primary exposure routes include working in occupations that utilize PFAS (e.g., textiles, chemical manufacturing, and firefighting) or drinking contaminated water. There are several communities with known contamination in North Carolina, including the area around the Chemours Fayetteville Works Facility and the lower Cape Fear River basin. Secondary exposure routes may include eating contaminated food or breathing contaminated air.^[1]

Health Concerns Related to PFAS

Research is still being conducted to better understand the health impacts of PFAS exposure. Studies to date have identified a growing list of associated health effects, including:

- Increased cholesterol levels in adults and children;

NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

“I'm struggling to understand the situation and what actions I can take”

- **Explain the state's actions to address the situation**
- **Provide additional information to residents**
 - **Webpages**
 - **Additional contact information**

“Who is responsible and how do I get my medical bills addressed?”

- **Explain how Chemours follows the consent order**
- **Make individuals aware of community groups that are actively engaged with PFAS issues**

Guidance and Recommendations

Connecting with DEQ Resources

- **Connect callers with DEQ where needed**
 - Explain role of DEQ to oversee the GenX investigation and consent order
 - Offer contact information – often Division of Waste Management at (919)-707-8200

Make people aware of additional materials

- **OEEB PFAS Website**
 - Clinician Memo
 - Testing and Treatment Factsheet
- **DEQ GenX Investigation Website**

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PFAS

! NCDHHS has developed new guidance for clinicians working with patients exposed to PFAS chemicals in our [NCDHHS PFAS Clinician Memo](#).

! On June 15, 2022, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released interim national drinking water health advisories for PFOA and PFOS and final national drinking water health advisories for GenX and PFBS. More information about PFAS is available on this [factsheet](#) along with information about [water testing and filtration options](#).

Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances

+ Expand All | - Collapse All

- + [What is PFAS?](#)
- + [How can I be exposed to PFAS?](#)
- + [How can PFAS affect my health?](#)
- + [PFAS in North Carolina](#)
- + [What is NCDHHS doing about PFAS?](#)
- + [Additional Information](#)

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Have discussions regarding the state of the science regarding PFAS chemicals

- **Currently, there are only four federally recognized health advisory levels for PFAS:**
 - **PFOA, PFOS, PFBS, GenX**
- **PFAS have been shown to have adverse impacts on health.**
 - **Specific health impacts related to specific PFAS exposures are not well understood for a majority of PFAS**

Contact Information

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