

WATER QUALITY QUESTIONS ANSWERED

PFAS



Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances

- PFAS are everywhere. EPA estimates that 80% of exposure comes from consumer products like non-stick cookware, food packaging, stain-proofing and water-proofing compounds on fabrics and carpets and dental floss.
- EPA estimates that 20% of exposure comes from drinking water. BJWSA has sampled our primary drinking water source, the Savannah River. The most recent results (February 2022) show total PFAS level at 20 parts per trillion (ppt). DHEC testing of rivers and lakes in South Carolina show levels from 0 to 7664 ppt with an average of 117 ppt.
- EPA is proposing an MCL (maximum contaminant level) for PFAS. BJWSA will comply with this new regulation as we do with all state and federal regulations. Compliance with the proposed MCL will likely require the addition of new treatment processes. We will evaluate the proposal from EPA, guidance from EPA and SCDHEC (S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control), and available research on PFAS removal to develop the best plan for BJWSA.
- Learn more at:
 - <https://scdhec.gov/environment/polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas>
 - <https://scdhec.gov/environment/polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas/pfas-bureau-water>

PFAS MEDIA BRIEFING #1

BY THE NUMBERS

- There are more than **9,000** PFAS;
- We can analyze for **40**;
- There are risk-based screening levels for **six**;
- There are unenforceable health advisories for **four**;
- There will soon be proposed MCLs for **two**.

ACRONYMS

EPA - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

MCL - Maximum Contaminant Level

PFAS - Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances

PFOS - Perfluorooctane Sulfonic Acid

PFOA - Perfluorooctanoic Acid

Visit our website for the most up-to-date information:

<https://scdhec.gov/PFAS>

1 HOW DO WE COME IN CONTACT WITH PFAS CHEMICALS?

80% of our exposure to PFAS comes from consumer products, such as, food packaging, microwave popcorn bags, cosmetics, treated fabrics and carpets, non-stick cookware, dental floss and more.

EPA assumes that 20% comes from drinking water and that individuals drink 2.5 liters of impacted water per day, 365 days/year for 70 years (lifetime exposure).

2 EPA IS EXPECTED TO PUBLISH A PROPOSED MCL FOR PFOS & PFOA BY MARCH 3, 2023.

- Public comment period starts and can be 30/60/90 days.
- Statutory date to finalize the proposed MCL is Sept. 3, 2023.
- Public water systems will have up to three years to comply with the new MCL but can apply for an additional two years.

Establishing an MCL takes time. MCLs are based on lifetime exposures from drinking the same source of water. PFAS may cause a chronic, or long-term, potential hazard. Any concentration at a maximum contaminant level (MCL) or less is considered safe.

3 WHAT CAN BE DONE IN THE SHORT TERM TO REDUCE FUTURE RISK OF EXPOSURE?

- When available, choose to purchase "PFAS-free" products.
- If PFAS has been detected in your drinking water, a point-of-use filter certified to remove PFAS compounds can be used. Follow manufacturer's instructions regarding frequency of replacement.
- Stay informed on the constantly changing PFAS landscape as new research is conducted and more is learned about exposure to these chemicals and how to reduce their presence in our environment.