

Floor Covering Media

Your Gateway to the Floor Covering Industry

Disturbing news that may be tough to swallow



Drinking water, believed to be safe, is used for cooking, washing hands, washing hair, brushing teeth and daily bathing. What you are about to read might be tough to swallow: The tragic reports about drinking water being tainted with a toxic chemical used to make Teflon are not getting any better.

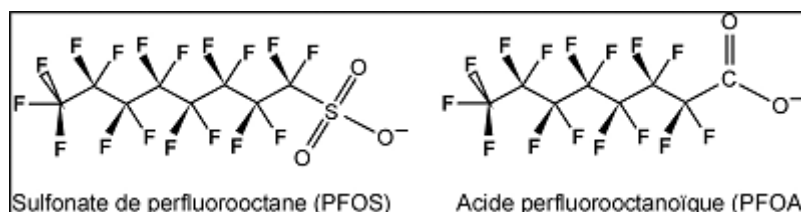
The chemical is [perfluorooctanoic acid](#) or [PFOA](#) that DuPont and other companies used for decades to make non-stick, waterproof and stain-resistant products. PFOA and related chemicals, which studies show can cause cancer and reproductive disorders, pollute virtually all Americans' blood and pass from mother to child in the womb.

It was during the summer of 2015 that a group of scientists at [Harvard](#) and the [University of Massachusetts](#) discovered PFOA is hazardous, even in the tiniest of doses; which is hundreds of times smaller than what the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency says is safe. There have been updates since this discovery. The more we learn, the more the situation worsens.

Consider the following:

Long known to severely contaminate drinking water near a DuPont plant in [Parkersburg, West Virginia](#), PFOA was recently found at high levels in the water supplies of [Hoosick Falls, New York](#), and [North Bennington, Vermont](#). Health officials say residents should not use contaminated water for drinking, cooking or brushing teeth.

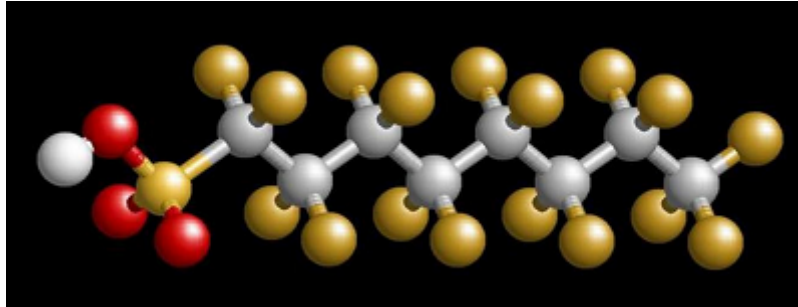
In Hoosick Falls, New York, the EPA warned residents not to drink water containing more 100 parts per trillion of PFOA, which is about four times lower than the agency's current non-enforceable health advisory level. But, because the EPA did not consider the most recent science, the new level is still 100 times higher than what the [Harvard-UMass study](#) said is safe.



California state scientists just listed PFOA and its chemical cousin, PFOS, as high priority for review and potential addition to the state's official registry of chemicals known to cause reproductive disorders. PFOA contaminates 14 California water systems serving more than 1.4 million people – more than any other state – and adding it to the registry under the state's Safe Drinking Water Act could require expensive treatment of those systems to reduce the pollution.

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EPA-mandated testing continues to find PFOA in more public water supplies nationwide. Last August EWG reported that EPA's sampling program found PFOA in 94 water systems serving more than 6.5 million people in 27 states. Since then, reports to EPA by local utilities have upped the number to 103 water supplies serving nearly 7 million people. (Contamination was not reported from any additional states.) The recently reported PFOA contamination includes:

Detections of PFOA in U.S. public water systems since August 2015

State	County	Public Water System	Population served
California	Orange	City of Anaheim	346,823
Georgia	Chattooga	Summerville	11,651
	Murray	Chatsworth	29,617
Massachusetts	Middlesex	Hudson Water Supply	18,838
North Carolina	Harnett	City of Dunn	11,747
New Jersey	Essex	South Orange Water Department	16,924
	Ocean	Point Pleasant Beach Water Department	12,000
Pennsylvania	Bucks	Doylestown Twp. Muni. Authority	8,655
West Virginia	Wood	Vienna	12,507
TOTAL			468,762

Last summer's testing results reported no water systems contaminated with PFOA above the EPA's previous advisory level, eight systems have had test results at or above the lower level EPA recommended in Hoosick Falls.

Detections of PFOA in U.S. public water systems at or above 100 parts per trillion

State	Public Water System	PFOA (parts per trillion)
Alabama	West Morgan - East Lawrence Water Authority	100
Delaware	Artesian Water Company	140
Minnesota	Oakdale	322 – 338
Pennsylvania	Warminster Municipal Authority	122 – 349
Pennsylvania	Warrington Township Water & Sewer Department	118.4
Pennsylvania	Doylestown Twp. Muni. Authority	206
Pennsylvania	Horsham Water & Sewer Authority	290
West Virginia	Vienna	129

Source:

[EWG](#)

from

[EPA](#)

Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring program

Keep in mind that the new level from EPA is still much higher than the safe level in the Harvard-UMass study. With evidence mounting that EPA's advisory level is too weak, states are taking action. Besides California's nomination of PFOA to its list of reproductive toxins, the Vermont Department of Public Health considered recent science and

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set a much more conservative drinking water advisory level: 20 parts per trillion, a standard by which every PFOA-contaminated water supply reported to EPA's is unsafe.

What's more, EPA's testing program only covers water system serving more than 10,000 people, which is why the contamination in Hoosick Falls and North Bennington was not detected. EWG again calls on DuPont and all other former makers of PFOA to immediately disclose all locations where the chemical was produced, used or dumped, and for local, state and federal officials to make sure the water in each place is tested.

[New Jersey](#) is a hot spot for teflon, according to Kathleen O'Brien of NJ Advance Media for NJ.com. There are millions of [Americans](#) who may be drinking toxic water, according to Alejandro Davia Fragosa, Climate Reporter for ThinkProgress.

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