What are Perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS)?

A group of man-made chemicals used in a range of common household products. Its resistance to natural degradation and its ability to repel oil, grease, and water has led to its widespread use from cookware to firefighting foam.

Why Protect Yourself?

Everyday, people may come into contact with small amounts of PFOS through exposure to dust, indoor and outdoor air, food, drinking water and certain consumer products that contain these chemicals.

Food and drinking water are thought to be the most important sources of exposure. Carpets and floors treated with PFOS-based waxes and sealants are also of particular concern as they have the most potential to affect babies and infants.

And while studies on the dangers of PFOS have not yet been ruled as definitive, there have been concerns that it is linked to increased cholesterol levels, decreased vaccine effectiveness, increased risk of thyroid disease, decreased fertility in women, lower infant birth weights and more ailments.

When PFOS are released into the environment (by spills or even through intended uses, such as fighting fires with PFOS-containing foams), they can enter our waterways, contaminating our potable water sources. These chemicals degrade very slowly, if at all, in the environment and may make their way back into our lives without our knowledge.

Together we can be free of

PFOS

Contact the following near you for support on combatting these pollutants.

Environmental Management Authority

Waste Management Agency

Local Recyclers

Fire Service

STOP THE POPs!
Identify, Learn & Act!

Learn More Today! **stopthepops.com**

BCRC CARIBBEAN
Basel Convention Regional Centre for Training and Technology Transfer for the Caribbean

UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

gef GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY INVESTING IN OUR PLANET

STOCKHOLM CONVENTION

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Safeguard yourself from

PFOS

Contained within popular household products such as non-stick cooking pots and pans. During your daily routine you may be in contact with Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), such as Perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) and not even know it.

Common Exposure Pathways

Contaminated Foods or Cooking Utensils

Improper preparation or storing foods in contaminated articles can lead to health concerns. Non-stick cookware also poses a health risk.

Fast food Wrappers

Grease-proof and stain resistant fast food wrappers used in the food and beverage industry may contain PFOS.

Firefighting Foams

Usage of PFOS in firefighting foams (for hydrocarbon-based fires) makes this industry particularly susceptible to or even influential in PFOS-related contamination issues.

Water and Stain-Resistant Clothing and Carpets

Clothes or carpets treated with PFOS for stain and/or water resistant properties are potential health hazards.

Drinking Water

Surface or groundwater can become contaminated from the use of PFOS firefighting foams in areas with water sources (rivers and aquifers)

STOP THE POPs!

Identify, Learn & Act!

The truth is, danger lurks where you least expect it.

Understand the Dangers of PFOS

Identify
The sources and uses of POPs/UPOPs.

Learn
How you and your family are exposed and affected.

Act
By minimising your exposure.

www.stopthepops.com

How To Reduce Exposure

Follow these tips to protect yourself

- Check your non-stick cookware to verify the PFOS content. Consider buying ceramic, glass or cast-iron cookware.
- Consider using alternatives to cooking materials or products such as bio-based food packaging.
- Minimise or avoid the use of water and stain-resistant products as they are likely to contain PFOS chemicals.
- Research the chemicals used in rugs and carpets before purchasing. If it is stain-resistant, it may contain PFOS chemicals.
- Avoid the consumption of livestock reared in close proximity to and the use of water near possibly contaminated sites.

Tips For Firefighters

- Seek safer alternative firefighting foams.
- Do not use PFOS/PFAS containing firefighting foams for training.
- Only use PFOS/PFAS containing foam for liquid fuel vapour suppression and liquid fuel fires (Class B fires).
- Store current stocks appropriately– consider Material Safety Data Sheets - secondary containment.
- Wear Personal Protective Equipement (PPE) whenever handling equipment. Wash contaminated PPE per manufacturer's instructions.
- Seek appropriate disposal of PFOS fire-fighting foam. Dispose of old or spent foam per manufacturer's guidelines.
- Visit your physician in case of exposure.
- Avoid consumption of water likely to be contaminated by firefighting foams.