

# EWG AND THE DEVIL WE KNOW'S GUIDE TO AVOIDING PFAS, A FAMILY OF CHEMICALS YOU DON'T WANT NEAR YOUR FAMILY

In 1946, DuPont introduced Teflon to the world, changing millions of people's lives – and polluting their bodies. Today, Teflon chemicals are found not only in pots and pans, but in the blood of people around the world, including that of 99 percent of Americans.

**In "The Devil We Know," filmmakers tell the story of the spread of Teflon, how the chemical has left a lasting mark in every home in America, and how it ravaged a town in West Virginia where DuPont made the chemicals.**

The latest research hints at a much broader problem – nearly all Americans are affected by exposure to nonstick chemicals in food, drinking water and consumer products.

## WHAT ARE PFAS CHEMICALS?

Per- or polyfluoroalkyl substances, known as PFAS chemicals, are a family of thousands of chemicals used to make water-, grease- and stain-repellent coatings for a vast array of consumer goods and industrial applications. **These chemicals are notoriously persistent in the environment and the human body, and some have been linked to serious health hazards.**

## WHAT ARE THE HEALTH HAZARDS OF PFAS CHEMICALS?

The two most notorious PFAS chemicals – PFOA, formerly used to make Teflon, and PFOS, formerly an ingredient in 3M's Scotchgard – were phased out under pressure from the Environmental Protection Agency after revelations of their hazards. Their manufacture, use and import is now banned in the U.S., but evidence suggests the next-generation PFAS chemicals that have replaced them may have similar toxicity. **PFAS chemicals pollute water, are resistant to degradation and remain in the body for years.**

## STUDIES HAVE LINKED PFAS CHEMICALS TO:

Testicular, kidney, liver and pancreatic cancer

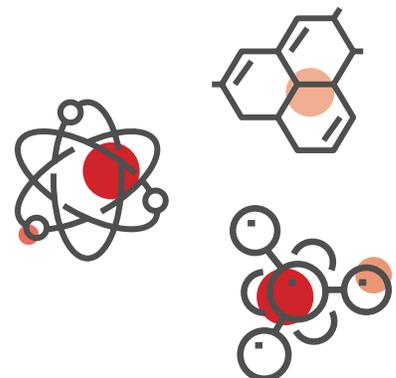
Weakened immune systems

Low birth weights

Endocrine disruption

Increased cholesterol

Weight gain in children and dieting adults



# WHERE ARE PFAS CHEMICALS FOUND AND HOW CAN I AVOID THEM?

## DRINKING WATER

EWG recently released its national Tap Water Database, which found that at least 16 million Americans in 33 states were being served tap water contaminated with nonstick chemicals. Many more people were not told that their drinking water contains PFAS chemicals at levels deemed harmful by independent scientists and EWG because the test information was not made public.

If PFAS chemicals have been detected in your water, reverse osmosis and activated carbon filters may be effective for reducing or removing the contaminants.

## COOKWARE

The most prominent sources of PTFE, the chemical name for Teflon, are nonstick pans and utensils.

To avoid these products, skip the nonstick, choosing stainless steel and cast iron cookware instead.

## FOOD PACKAGING

PFAS chemicals are widely used to coat paper and cardboard food and bakery wrappers. Skip pre-cooked, packaged foods and opt for home cooking instead.

Pop popcorn the old-fashioned way - on the stovetop. Microwaveable popcorn bags are nearly always coated with PFAS chemicals on the inside.

Cut back on fast food and greasy carryout food, and [check out EWG's 2017 report](#) that found nearly all major brands use PFAS-treated wrappers.

## CLOTHING

Textile products labeled Teflon, Scotchgard, Stainmaster or Gore-Tex, and clothes labeled stain- or water-repellent, usually contain PFAS chemicals. While many responsible clothing companies are seeking safer alternatives, few have made it to market so far.

## HOME GOODS

PFAS chemicals nearly always lurk in stain-resistant furniture and carpets, as well as spray treatments for leather and fabric protection.

Always avoid the coated products when possible and skip optional stain-repellant treatments.

## COSMETICS

Dozens of personal care products, including dental floss, have PFAS ingredients.

Choose personal care products without "PTFE" or "fluoro" ingredients. Use EWG's Skin Deep® database and EWG's Healthy Living app to find safer choices.

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