

# What are PFAS?

Per- or poly-fluorinated alkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of over 4,700 synthetic chemicals.

**They are toxic to both humans and the environment, and the full extent of their harm is still unknown.**

PFAS are in many everyday products such as food packaging, waterproof textiles and cosmetics; and in several industrial products such as firefighting foams and pesticides.

The most common PFAS chemicals are PFOA, PFOS and PFHxS.

## Can it affect my health?

**Yes.** PFAS have been linked to cancers, thyroid disease, ulcerative colitis, liver damage, pregnancy-related illness and child development health risks.

Emerging evidence indicates that lower concentrations of PFAS than previously understood can still impact human health.

## Am I at risk?

**Yes.** PFAS have been detected in human blood and breast milk. They are present in drinking water and accumulate in food webs ending up on our plates.

PFAS have been found in Scotland's drinking water above levels deemed acceptable in the EU and US.



PFAS are called forever chemicals because they can exist in environments for thousands of years. They accumulate in the air, water, soil and microorganisms.

## Does it harm the environment?

**Yes.** Testing has so far detected PFAS in 330 species worldwide, and is estimated to be in many more. This includes otters in England and Wales and seabirds in Scotland. In England, the Environment Agency found PFAS in 97% of 470 freshwater sites.

## What is the Scottish Government doing?

The UK regulatory landscape for PFAS is fragmented and continues to fall behind the EU.

The European Commission is considering a broad ban on PFAS and the UK should do the same.

We all have the right to  
**NON-TOXIC ENVIRONMENTS TO LIVE, WORK, STUDY AND PLAY**

### Get involved

Campaign against PFAS use:

[PFAS free](#)

[ChemTrust](#)



## What can I do if I have a concern?

Contact our Rights Officer to talk more at [rights@ercs.scot](mailto:rights@ercs.scot)

Contact our free legal advice service at [www.ercs.scot/get-advice](http://www.ercs.scot/get-advice)

Call our office on **0131 358 0038** or freephone on **0800 861 1738**

For a full set of references contact [rights@ercs.scot](mailto:rights@ercs.scot)