



Drinking Water Facts:

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and private wells in New Jersey

Updated July 2025

Introduction

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), also known as “forever chemicals,” are a group of manmade chemicals which have been widely used in manufacturing since the 1940s due to their heat and chemical resistant properties. Many complex PFAS do not break down in the environment and once released, will continue to persist in the environment until they are removed. This is why they are referred to as “forever chemicals”. Most people in the U.S. have detectable levels of PFAS in their bodies, but concentrations of some PFAS have greatly decreased over time since large U.S. manufacturer phase-outs of the chemicals.

Drinking water can be a significant source of PFAS exposure, when the drinking water source is contaminated with PFAS. Even low concentrations of PFAS in drinking water can lead to large increase of PFAS exposure in your body which builds up over time. Infants and children drink more water per body weight than adults and may have greater exposures than adults.

Health Effects

Studies of the general population, communities with PFAS-contaminated drinking water, and exposed workers indicate that exposure to PFAS increases health risks. The most consistent human health effect findings for PFOA and PFOS are increases in serum cholesterol, decreased birthweight, kidney and testicular cancer, decreased antibody response following vaccination, and increases in some liver enzymes.


- Additional health studies of PFAS-impacted communities are ongoing. More information can be found here: atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/health-studies/multi-site-study.html.
- If you have health concerns, you should contact your health care provider. Clinical guidance for your health care provider is available at: atsdr.cdc.gov/pfas/hcp/clinical-overview/index.html.
- More detailed information on health effects, biomonitoring, basis of the drinking water standards, and other frequently asked questions can be found in **our main PFAS in Drinking Water fact sheet**: nj.gov/health/ceohs/documents/pfas_drinking%20water.pdf.

Occurrence of PFAS in NJ private well water

From December 2021 through 2023, almost 16,000 wells have been tested for PFOA, PFOS, and PFNA during real estate transfers as required by the NJ Private Well Testing Act. Among the tested wells, **11.2%** had at least one PFAS tested above a New Jersey drinking water standard.

Several communities in North Jersey have a large percentage of private well users with contamination from PFAS, but also has been detected in private well water statewide.

Visit bit.ly/NJPWTAmaps for **interactive** maps to find the well results in the 2x2 mile grid where you live. Click the tabs at the top of the webpage to explore (Counties, Municipalities, Grids, etc.).

Use the  button to enter your street address.

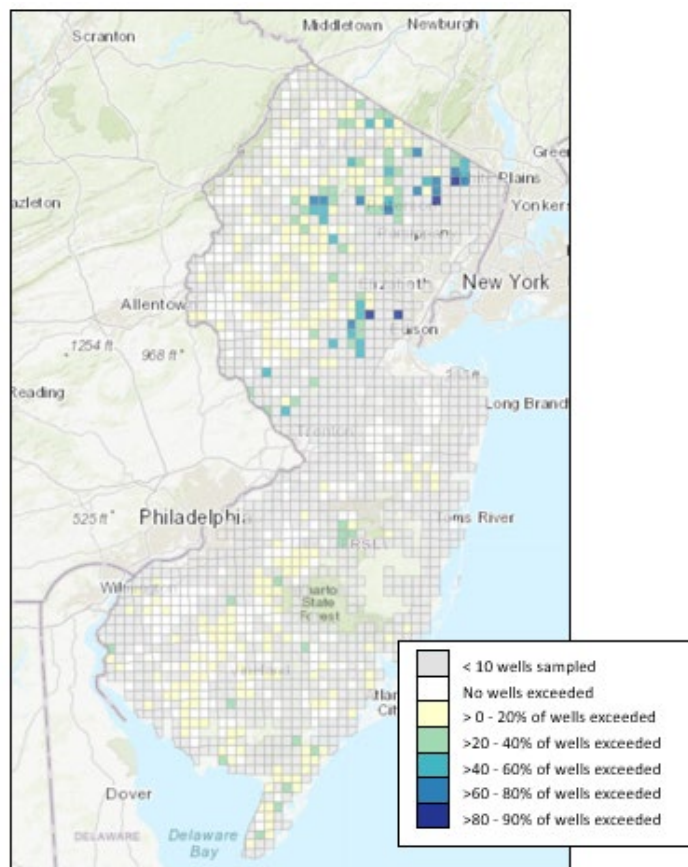


Figure 1. PFAS detections in 2x2-mile grids NJ Private Well Testing Act 2002-2023. New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

NJ Spill Fund

NJ Spill Compensation Fund Claims Program (NJ Spill Fund) is a program that provides financial support for private well owners impacted by discharge of hazardous substances. For eligible homeowners, the NJ Spill Fund will cover costs of some water testing, water treatment installation, and maintenance.

Drinking Water Standards

In 2018, NJ became the first state to establish an enforceable drinking water standard for a PFAS chemical when it set a maximum contaminant level (MCL) for PFNA. MCLs for PFOA and PFOS followed in 2020.

In April 2024, USEPA finalized MCLs that are more stringent than NJ values as they consider data on health effects in human populations. Once adopted, the Federal MCLs will replace the current NJ MCLs and includes MCLs for additional PFAS.

NJ Spill Fund set financial relief criteria, based on the USEPA Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCL) to determine your eligibility for NJ Spill Fund support.

EPA MCLs/NJ Spill Fund Financial Relief Criteria	
PFOS	4 ppt
PFOA	4 ppt
PFNA	10 ppt
PFHxS	10 ppt
GenX	10 ppt
PFBS*	2,000 ppt

Footnotes: ppt=parts per trillion = ng/L; *= Health Based Water Concentration (HBWC). All contaminants listed are based on the USEPA's MCL with the exception of PFBS which is a *Health Based Water Concentration (HBWC). More specific details are available from USEPA ([epa.gov/sdwa/and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas](https://www.epa.gov/sdwa/and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas)) for the basis and interpretation of standards.

More information on NJDEP Spill Fund Financial Relief Criteria dep.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/srp/financial_relief_criteria.pdf

New Jersey Private Well Testing Act

The NJ PWTA is a consumer information law that requires private well water to be tested by a certified laboratory during real estate transfer and requires landlords to test well water supplied to tenants every five years and provide the results. As of December 1, 2021, PFNA, PFOA, and PFOS were included as required parameters in the NJ Private Well Testing Act (NJ PWTA).

Recommendations for testing your water

- **If you live near other homes with detections of PFAS, you should strongly consider testing.** You can use the interactive NJ PWTA maps to find local testing results where you live. Your local health department may send notifications to individuals living near a neighboring well with identified PFAS. Find your local health department contact information: localhealth.nj.gov.
- If you decide to test, we recommend you use a certified laboratory. NJDEP maintains a list of certified laboratories you can find online at: njems.nj.gov/DataMiner
 - > Select [Search by Category](#)
 - > Select [Certified Laboratories](#)
 - > Scroll down and select: [Laboratories Certified for PWTA Sample Collection](#)
- The cost of testing can be prohibitive for many private well owners. Your local health department or township administration may have additional guidance or support. Please note, if PFAS is detected above the financial relief criteria **NJ Spill Fund** will reimburse the cost of testing.

If PFAS is detected in your water

- If PFAS is detected above the financial relief criteria, the **NJ Spill Fund** also supports the cost and maintenance of a water treatment system. For specific eligibility and application information please visit: dep.nj.gov/srp/finance/eca-spill-fund
- **Bottled water sold in NJ** is regulated by the NJ Department of Health and is required to meet NJ state drinking water standards. Bottled water is not yet required to reduce PFAS to the new USEPA standards.
- **Water treatment devices** utilizing granular carbon filters, reverse osmosis, ion exchange resins and other specialized treatment media are technologies that can reduce PFAS in drinking water. NSF International, a third-party organization that certifies water treatment units, has certified that water treatment devices certified to NSF/ANSI Standard 53 or NSF/ANSI Standard 58 to reduce PFAS are an effective way to reduce PFAS below 20 parts per trillion (ppt).