

Important Information about your Drinking Water

In June of 2020 and April of 2021, Eau Claire Waterworks voluntarily collected water samples of the City's drinking water and tested them for perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). PFAS is a group of man-made chemicals that have been used since the 1950s. Results indicated levels of PFAS detected below all individual recommended groundwater standards. In June 2021 WI Department of Health Services issued revised guidance ([Hazard Index](#)) in regarding mixtures of PFAS compounds. The June 2020 and April 2021 sample results based on the DHS guidance for PFAS mixtures, created concern for elevated health risks.

After consultation with DNR and DHS the City of Eau Claire immediately sampled all its well and combined sources of water on July 6th, 2021. Four wells were found to contain levels of PFAS that exceed recommended groundwater standards or contain a combination of PFAS that, when looked at collectively, contained a mixture of PFAS which represented an increased level of health risk. The water leaving the treatment plant for public drinking also contained PFAS compounds that was below individual recommended groundwater standards but contained a mixture of PFAS which represented an increased level of health risk.

Wells with levels of PFAS above recommended standards were immediately shut off. Eau Claire will only use water from wells that do not exceed recommended PFAS standards and guidance levels. The remaining wells in operation (11) sample results are below the recommended groundwater standards and for PFAS mixtures guidance.

Based on the water sampling results and immediate action taken to shut off the drinking water wells with concerning levels of PFAS, the risk to human health is believed to be low at this time. The City is confirming that water leaving the treatment plant is below all recommended standards and guidance levels by resampling on July 12, 2021. Results are expected to be available July 14, 2021.

While Eau Claire residents do not need to stop drinking or using the city's water, any resident who is concerned about their PFAS exposure can decrease their exposure by using an alternative water source for drinking, making beverages, making infant formula or making foods that use a lot of water, like flavored gelatin or rice.

Alternative water sources may include:

- Purified or filtered bottled water
- Other sources of water that have been tested for PFAS and do not have levels above recommended standards.
- Filtered water from a pitcher, sink, or whole-house filter system with a certified filter technology. A granular activated carbon (GAC) filter that meets ANSI/NSF Standard 53 or a reverse osmosis (RO) filter with an included GAC component can filter out PFAS. These numbers will be printed on the filter and/or packaging. More information about filtering out PFAS from drinking water is available here: [Reducing PFAS in Your Drinking Water](#). Boiling water does not remove PFAS.

Women who are breastfeeding are recommended to continue breastfeeding. There is not believed to be a health risk for breastfeeding women who are drinking water from the City water supply.

Potential Health Risks of PFAS

Long term exposure to high levels of the PFAS may increase cholesterol levels, reduce antibody levels, and reduce a woman's fertility.

Not all PFAS cause health effects at the same level, so the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) uses a [hazard index](#) to evaluate risk of exposure to closely-related chemicals to account for those variabilities.

What is being done to correct the problem?

The City of Eau Claire is not in violation of any drinking water standards or regulations and has taken actions proactively to protect the health of its customers. Wells with levels of PFAS above recommended standards were immediately shut off. Eau Claire will only use water from wells that do not exceed recommended PFAS standards and guidance levels. The remaining 11 wells in operation sample results are below the recommended groundwater standards and for PFAS mixtures guidance.

The City of Eau Claire is exploring ways to mitigate the concentration of PFAS in the wells and will continue voluntary testing every two weeks (initially) to evaluate the levels of PFAS in the water system. These test results and all other PFAS sampling results will be shared publicly as soon as the samples results are available at the City's website.

What are Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and why are they harmful?

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a large group of manmade chemicals that are resistant to heat, water, and oil. For decades, they have been used in many industrial applications and consumer products such as carpeting, waterproof clothing, upholstery, food paper wrappings, personal care products, fire-fighting foams, and metal plating. They are still used today. PFAS have been found at low levels both in the environment and in blood samples of the general U.S. population.

These chemicals are persistent, which means they do not break down in the environment. They also bioaccumulate, meaning the amount builds up over time in people and animals. Studies in animals who were exposed to PFAS found links between the chemicals and increased cholesterol, changes in the body's hormones and immune system, and decreased fertility.

How does PFAS get into drinking water?

PFAS can get into drinking water when products containing them are used or spilled onto the ground or into lakes and rivers. PFAS move easily through the ground, getting into groundwater that is used for some water supplies or for private drinking water wells. When spilled into lakes or rivers used as sources of drinking water, they can get into drinking water supplies. PFAS in the air can also end up in rivers and lakes used for drinking water.

How could you be exposed to PFAS compounds?

The main way people are exposed to these chemicals is by swallowing them. PFAS chemicals are sometimes found in drinking water and in cooking or food packaging products. Touching products made with PFAS or touching water that contains PFAS is not the main way people are exposed to these chemicals. PFAS chemicals do not easily absorb into the skin.

If you have questions regarding the City's drinking water or the testing, please contact:

Lane Berg – 715-839-1876

GENERAL PFAS QUESTIONS --- PLEASE SEE THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES WEBSITE: <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Contaminants/PFAS.html>

HEALTH RELATED QUESTIONS---DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES: 608-266-1120 or DHSEnvHealth@wisconsin.gov More information about PFAS and health risk can be found on the Wisconsin DHS website at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/chemical/pfas.htm>.

OPERATION OF THE CITY WATER UTILITY--- Lane Berg – 715-839-1876

Name of Responsible Person

Area Code-Telephone Number

Street Address

City

State

Zip

I certify that the information and statements contained in this public notice are true and correct and have been provided to consumers in accordance with the delivery, content, format, and deadline requirements in Subchapter VII of ch. NR 809, Wis. Adm. Code.

X

Signature

Date

** Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail