

New Study: 100% of breast milk samples tested positive for toxic “forever chemicals”

New study finds that newer PFAS chemicals build up in people, despite opposite claims made by the chemical industry.

SEATTLE, WA, UNITED STATES, May 13, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today [a new study finding](#) toxic chemicals in 100% of breast milk samples tested was published in Environmental Science & Technology. Scientists from

Toxic-Free Future, Indiana University, the University of Washington, and Seattle Children’s Research Institute led the research, which shows that toxic PFAS (per- and polyfluorinated substances)—including new generation compounds currently in use—build up in people. Despite [chemical industry assurances](#) that current-use PFAS do not build up in people, the study finds



detections of these chemicals in breast milk to be on the rise globally and doubling every four years.

“

While we know that PFAS chemicals may be harmful, it is important to remember that breast milk provides significant benefits to newborn and child health. Breast milk is still best for newborns.”

Dr. Sheela Sathyanarayana

Previous reports have confirmed that companies put PFAS chemicals in a wide range of everyday products, from food packaging and clothing to carpet and upholstery. States and retailers are starting to take action to restrict these chemicals in products, but federal regulations are needed to prevent the use of PFAS or other chemicals that can build up in breast milk in consumer products.

This study, the first since 2005 to analyze PFAS in breast

milk from mothers in the United States, found that 50 out of 50 women tested positive for PFAS, with levels ranging from 52 parts per trillion (ppt) to more than 500 ppt. Breast milk samples were tested for 39 different PFAS, including 9 current-use compounds. Results found that both current-use and phased-out PFAS contaminate breast milk, exposing nursing infants to the effects of toxic chemicals. A total of 16 PFAS were detected with 12 found in more than 50% of the samples. The levels of PFAS that are currently in use in a wide range of products are rising in breast milk.

“We now know that babies, along with nature’s perfect food, are getting toxic PFAS that can affect their immune systems and metabolism,” explains Toxic-Free Future science director and study co-author Erika Schreder. “We shouldn’t be finding any PFAS in breast milk and our findings make it clear that broader phaseouts are needed to protect babies and young children during the most vulnerable stages of life. Moms work hard to protect their babies, but big corporations are putting these, and other toxic chemicals that can contaminate breast milk, in products when safer options are available.”

“These findings make it clear that the switch to newer PFAS over the last decade didn’t solve the problem,” explains Dr. Amina Salamova, study co-author and associate research scientist at Indiana University. “This study provides more evidence that current-use PFAS are building up in people. What this means is that we need to address the entire class of PFAS chemicals, not just legacy-use variations.”

Chemical companies make PFAS chemicals for their stain-resistant, water-repellent, and grease-proof properties. A growing body of scientific research has found links between exposures to PFAS and a wide range of health problems including a weaker immune system, cancer, increased cholesterol levels, pregnancy-induced hypertension, liver damage, reduced fertility, and increased risk of thyroid disease. Scientists are most concerned about the cumulative impact resulting from exposures to products, contaminated drinking water, and contaminated food.

“Exposures to PFAS can weaken our immune system, making a person more vulnerable to infectious diseases,” explains Dr. Sheela Sathyanarayana, study co-author and associate professor of pediatrics at the University of Washington and Seattle Children’s Research Institute. “It is especially concerning to see exposures happening through bioaccumulation in breast milk, which then exposes a nursing child during a critical period of development.”

Currently, national regulations fail to prevent PFAS from being used in most products. While federal action lags, Washington state has created a precautionary approach that aims to phase out the use of harmful chemical classes like PFAS. Under the Safer Products for Washington Act, policymakers are identifying the products resulting in exposure to harmful chemicals and will move to restrict them when safer alternatives are found. Similarly, the European Union is following a precautionary approach, moving to adopt regulations to ban any uses of PFAS that aren’t needed or can be substituted. Several states have also banned specific PFAS uses, such as in food packaging and firefighting foam, and 18 retailers, including Taco Bell and McDonald’s, have now pledged to eliminate or reduce PFAS in food packaging, which impacts more than 77,000 stores worldwide.

“If a harmful chemical can end up in breast milk due to its persistence or ability to bioaccumulate, it should be prohibited in everyday products we are constantly exposed to,” said Laurie Valeriano, executive director of Toxic-Free Future. “It’s time for more states and the federal government to follow the lead of Washington state and ban PFAS and other equally dangerous

classes of chemicals in products, especially when safer alternatives are found. Prevention-based policies are critical to ending this harmful and unnecessary contamination of our most precious resources—from breast milk to drinking water.”

Some federal action is pending, with Rep. Debbie Dingell expected to re-introduce legislation to ban all PFAS in food packaging. “Rep. Dingell’s bill takes an important step forward to end a clearly unnecessary use of persistent, toxic PFAS. At the same time, Congress must take broader action to prevent the use of PFAS and other classes of harmful chemicals that can end up in breast milk,” said Liz Hitchcock, director of Safer Chemicals Healthy Families.

Some food retailers have taken actions that help reduce exposure to PFAS and demonstrate that alternatives are feasible. “We need swift actions from more retailers to help protect people from these toxic chemicals,” explains Mike Schade, Mind the Store campaign director. “We’ve seen more commitments than ever from retailers phasing out PFAS over the last two years, proving that change is possible and safer alternatives are accessible. Customers hold more power than they may realize—and companies are listening. Retailers like Burger King should take definitive action on PFAS and make sure their food packaging is free of harmful chemicals.”

The Mind the Store campaign and its partners have recently launched a petition to Burger King urging them to take action by committing to the elimination of PFAS in their food-packaging materials.

Stephanie Stohler

Toxic-Free Future

sstohler@toxicfreefuture.org

Visit us on social media:

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

[LinkedIn](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/541026523>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2021 IPD Group, Inc. All Right Reserved.