TIPS BEFORE TAPS

STEEP
Sources, Transport, Exposure & Effects of PFASs
UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND SUPERFUND RESEARCH PROGRAM

REDUCE YOUR PFAS EXPOSURE

98%
Americans with PFASs in blood

>600
U.S. contaminated PFAS sites

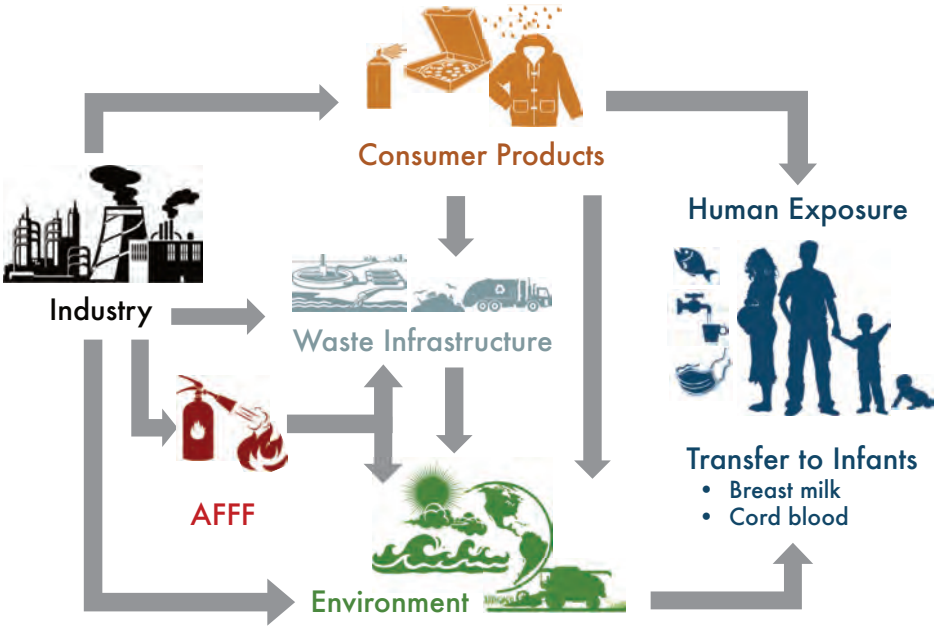
>4000
PFASs used in commerce

6 million
Americans with high PFAS levels in drinking water

WHERE DO PFASs COME FROM?

PFASs are man-made. There are no natural sources of these chemicals. They can enter the soil, water, and air near areas where they are manufactured or where PFAS-containing products are used.

Once PFASs are in the environment, these stable compounds spread around the globe and can be found from the North Pole to the South Pole.



Adapted with permission from the Sunderland Lab.

HOW ARE PEOPLE EXPOSED TO PFASs?

People are exposed to PFASs in two ways:

1. PFASs enter the environment at several types of sites—manufacturing, industrial, waste disposal, and airports or military bases were fire fighting foam is used. They find their way to human consumption through drinking water or the food web.

2. People can be exposed through direct use of consumer products that have been treated with PFAS chemicals. Examples are water resistant clothing or takeout food containers.

WHY ARE PFASs BAD FOR YOU?

The human health effects of PFASs are not fully understood, but have been linked to obesity, high cholesterol, and some cancers. While the exact effects are still unclear, scientists agree that you should work to reduce your PFAS exposure.

WHY ARE PFASs HARD TO GET RID OF?

PFASs are extremely persistent chemicals that are easily transported through the environment. If PFASs have entered your drinking water supply or contaminated local fish that you eat, you should encourage local environmental managers to eliminate the source of the PFAS contamination. More immediately, you can have your drinking water tested and, if PFASs are detected, install an activated carbon filter on your faucet or a reverse osmosis system.

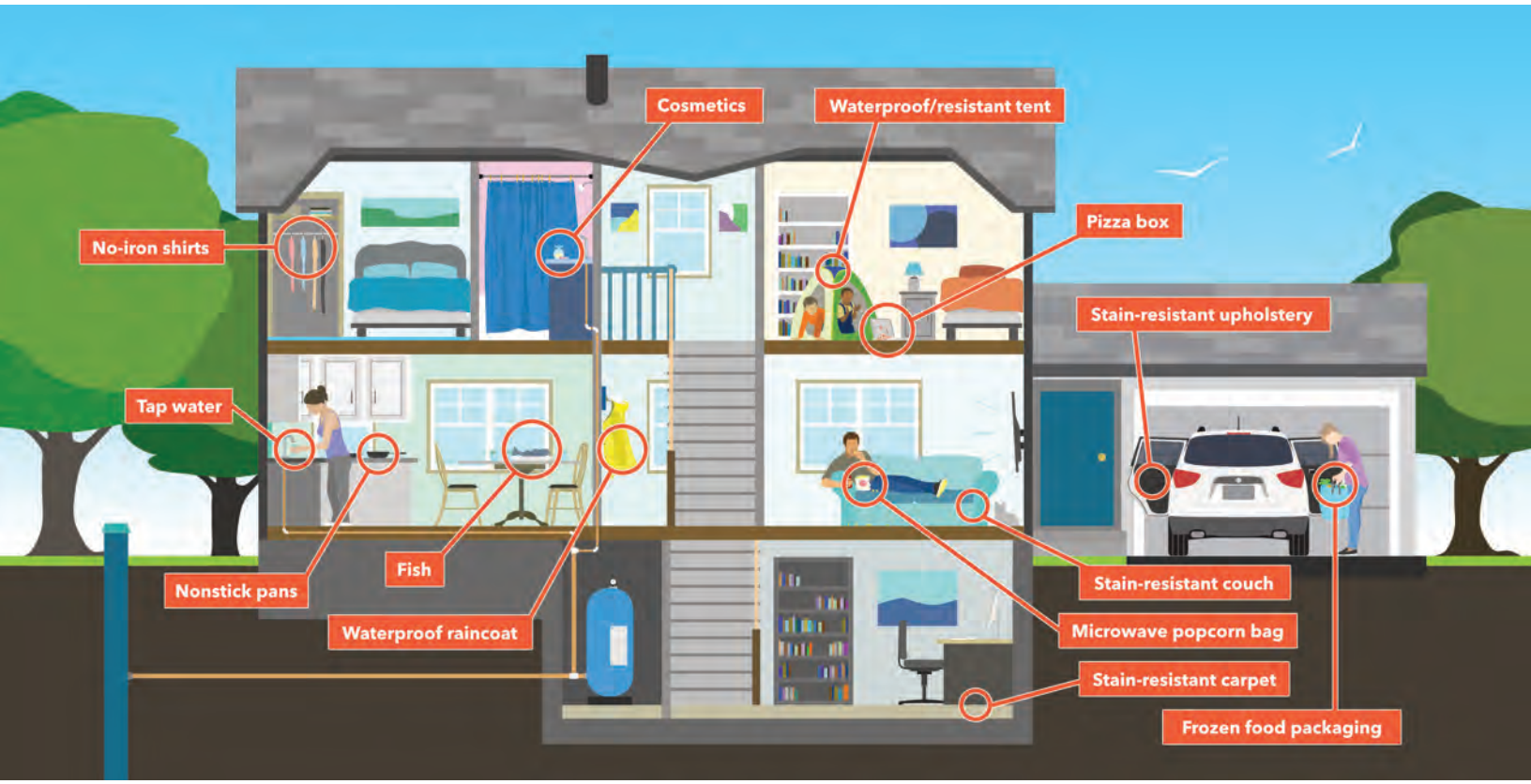
HOW CAN YOU TAKE ACTION?

For most people, the prominent sources of contamination are in your own home. Stain-resistant, nonstick, or waterproof consumer products are the most common household sources of PFAS exposure. The good news is that you can choose not to use these products. Also, work with advocacy groups to insist on PFAS-free products.

WHAT SHOULD YOU AVOID?

Maybe your work or hobbies prevent you from eliminating every single source of PFASs, but any reduction in exposure is worth the effort. Love those chemically treated no-iron shirts? Consider: friends and family would rather have you cancer-free than wrinkle-free.

- Takeout containers such as pizza boxes and sandwich wrappers
- Nonstick pots, pans, and utensils
- Microwave popcorn bags
- Camping tents
- Stain prevention treatment for clothing, furniture, and carpets.
- Stain-repellent or water-repellent clothing
- Certain cosmetics



THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

HARVARD T.H. CHAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Department of Environmental Health

SILENT SPRING INSTITUTE
Researching the Environment and Women's Health

NIH National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
Superfund Research Program

STEEP is funded under award number P42ES027706.

More information about STEEP is available at **uri.edu/steep**