



PFAS and Pellston Drinking Water

Fact Sheet - February 12, 2020

What has happened?

A residential well near the Pellston Airport showed amounts of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) above the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services' (MDHHS) screening levels and the Michigan Department of Great Lakes and Energy's (EGLE) drinking water criterion.

- MDHHS public health screening levels are the amount of certain PFAS chemicals public health scientists use to help determine if further investigation is needed to protect people's health. Amounts of a chemical found in drinking water below screening levels are not currently known or expected to cause health problems.
- EGLE residential drinking water criterion is 70 ng/L for PFOA and PFOS combined for regulatory actions. When PFOA and PFOS are above 70 ng/L (same as parts per trillion (ppt)) in drinking water, EGLE can require regulatory action such as further testing.

The well owner was provided with bottled water and a drinking water filter will be provided as a temporary measure to protect the residents' health.

What are PFAS?

PFAS are a large group of human-made chemicals that are fire resistant, and repel oil, stains, grease, and water. They are used in fire-fighting foams, stain repellants, nonstick cookware, waterproof clothing and shoes, and many other products.

PFAS move in the groundwater and can get into wells. They stay in the environment for a long time. They also can build up in people and animals. Most people in the United States have some PFAS in their blood because they are used in so many household products.

Why is there PFAS in the well's water?

We are not certain why there are PFAS in the water. EGLE is working to learn more about where the PFAS came from.

What are the next steps?

EGLE will begin an environmental investigation, working with the Airport as it conducts testing to determine where PFAS is in groundwater in the area. Starting February 10, EGLE staff has visited homes near the airport and requested permission to collect a sample of water to test for PFAS. Sampling is scheduled to start Tuesday, February 18th.

The first water test results are expected about two weeks after the water is collected. Residents will be provided with their results, and recommendations on using their water based on those results. These recommendations might include using a filter for your drinking water. If so, a free filter will be provided to you by the Health Department of Northwest Michigan (HDNW).

The test results will determine further actions regarding the investigation, and whether water from additional homes need to be tested.

Your health and safety are of utmost importance. EGLE, the Health Department of Northwest Michigan, and MDHHS are working to protect the health and safety of the residents.

How will you know if your well water should be tested?

EGLE will contact you if you live in an area where your water should be tested. The test will be provided to you at no cost. Residents can also fill out cards and request testing, and can get cards from the Village, Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians and HDNW.

Can PFAS harm your health?

Most people do not have health problems from PFAS. Having PFAS exposure or PFAS in your body does not mean you will have health problems now or in the future.

Some health studies in people who have been exposed to high amounts of PFAS have found health effects linked to some PFAS such as:

- Decreased chance of a woman getting pregnant
- Increased chance of high blood pressure in pregnant women
- Increased chance of thyroid disease
- Changed immune response
- Increased cholesterol levels
- Increased chance of cancer, especially kidney and testicular cancers

What if you live near the airport and you're concerned about your well water?

At this time, we don't have test results showing whether other wells in the area have PFAS. EGLE may ask for permission to test your water if you live in the investigation area. That is the only way to know if there is PFAS in your water.

If you're concerned about your well water, you can use another source of water, such as bottled water for uses where you might swallow the water. This includes drinking, cooking, making baby formula or food, and rinsing fruits and vegetables. Touching the water is not a concern. You can bathe, shower, and clean with your well water.

Has water been tested at other locations in the area?

Yes. The water at Pellston Schools and the Pioneer Professional Building was tested. PFAS were not detected in the water in these buildings.

Where can you get more information?

A community meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 12 at the Pellston High School Auditorium. An open house and time for questions will be held from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m., with the presentation from 6 to 7:15 p.m. and time for additional questions after.

For more information, contact EGLE at 989-217-0083 or Health Department of Northwest Michigan at 231-547-7651.

For additional information about PFAS, visit michigan.gov/pfasresponse/.