

# PFAS Contamination in and around the Town of Stella: HEALTH INFORMATION

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) first discovered contamination of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) during their statewide groundwater investigation in late 2022. Additional surface water and groundwater testing has shown high levels of PFAS throughout the region. High levels of PFAS may pose a health risk to people who become exposed to them. This document from the Department of Health Services (DHS) provides guidance, tips, and resources for area residents and visitors for safely participating in activities that may expose them to PFAS.



## DRINKING WATER

Drinking water that has PFAS in it is the primary way that people can be exposed to the largest amounts of PFAS.

- ▶ **DO** respond to the DNR to have your private well water tested for PFAS if you are within the eligible radius for DNR-led private well water testing.
- ▶ **DO** contact the DNR if you have PFAS levels above DHS's health advisory levels in your private well water. You may be eligible for short-term emergency bottled water and a well replacement.
- ▶ **DON'T** consume water from wells with PFAS levels above DHS's health advisory levels.



## FISH CONSUMPTION

Eating fish that contain PFAS can expose you to high levels of PFAS and other contaminants because these contaminants can bioaccumulate, or build up, in fish over time.

- ▶ **DON'T** eat more than one fish meal per month of ANY fish caught from the Moen Lake chain. This is because PFAS levels in these fish are too high.
- ▶ **DON'T** eat walleye longer than 19 inches from the Moen Lake chain if you are a child under 15 or someone who is or may become pregnant. This is because mercury levels in these fish are too high.



## GARDENING

Scientists are still learning how PFAS move through soil and into plants, fruits, and vegetables. The PFAS of highest concern tend to stay in the roots of plants, rather than in the plant's fruits and vegetables. However, when PFAS levels are high in water, plants may still take up that PFAS into fruits and leaves.

- ▶ **DO** use water with PFAS levels below DHS's health advisory levels when watering fruit and vegetable gardens.

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## SURFACE WATER RECREATION

Surface water testing shows that some lakes and rivers are impacted by high levels of PFAS while others are not:

- PFAS levels are **above** health-based standards in Snowden Lake, Starks Creek, Second Lake through Fifth Lake, and the north branch of the Pelican River. The highest levels of PFAS are in Snowden Lake.
- PFAS levels are **below** health-based standards in Moen Lake, George Lake, Lake Thompson, Stella Lake, Spur Lake, and Ginty Lake.

There are many health benefits to swimming and other water recreation, and there are safe ways to recreate while limiting your exposure to PFAS. The following recommendations will not only protect you against exposure to PFAS in affected lakes, but will also protect you from other hazards commonly found in surface water.

### For Snowden Lake, Starks Creek, Second Lake through Fifth Lake, and the north branch of the Pelican River:

- ▶ **DO** participate in boating, canoeing, wading, paddleboarding, or other activities that have a lower chance of swallowing water. Limit your time swimming, waterskiing, tubing, or doing other activities that have a higher chance of swallowing water.

### For all lakes and rivers:

- ▶ **DO** look for clear water when choosing a spot to swim or wade. Steer clear of water with noticeable discolor, odor, and any surface scum or foam.
- ▶ **DON'T** swallow lake or river water. Besides PFAS, lake and river water can also contain bacteria and parasites that can make you sick if you swallow it.
- ▶ **DO** keep an eye on children and encourage them not to swallow surface water. Children tend to swallow twice as much water as adults do while swimming and playing in water.
- ▶ **DO** wash your hands with clean water and soap before eating food after you've been in the water or touching sand or soil.



## CONTACTS

**Department of Natural Resources (DNR):**

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**Department of Health Services (DHS):**

[DHSEnvHealth@dhs.wi.gov](mailto:DHSEnvHealth@dhs.wi.gov)

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**Oneida County Health Department:**

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715-369-6111



## RESOURCES

**DNR Town of Stella website**



**DHS PFAS website**



**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) PFAS website**

