



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

ROBERT GORDON  
DIRECTOR

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
May 15, 2019

**CONTACT:** Lynn Sutfin  
517-241-2112  
[SutfinL1@michigan.gov](mailto:SutfinL1@michigan.gov)

## **North Kent County PFAS Exposure Assessment participants starting to receive results**

*Invited residents can still participate, urged to call 844-464-7327*

LANSING, Mich. – Blood test results are starting to be sent to participants in the North Kent County per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) Exposure Assessment. The PFAS Exposure Assessment is being conducted by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and Kent County Health Department (KCHD) and there is still time for selected residents to participate.

MDHHS and KCHD have been collecting blood samples and surveying residents of North Kent County who were exposed to PFAS through their drinking water since November 2018. Lab tests are measuring 24 PFAS analytes in the blood and it takes about 16 weeks for participants to receive test results. Drinking water samples from wells of participants' homes are also being analyzed for the same 24 PFAS analytes to compare to the blood levels.

The PFAS Exposure Assessment is evaluating the relationship between drinking water with PFAS and the amount in the body. The assessment has included collecting blood samples and information on their activities that could result in PFAS exposure. Kent County was chosen for this assessment because no other area in Michigan has as many wells exceeding the advisory level nor are any test results as high.

Households were chosen from those that have a drinking water well located within the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) North Kent County environmental investigation area and whose drinking water well has been tested by EGLE or by Wolverine Worldwide's contractor and found to have PFAS. Two groups were identified to participate – those who had drinking water levels over the US Environmental Protection Agency's drinking water lifetime health advisory level of 70 parts per trillion and those who had drinking water levels of less than 70 parts per trillion. A sampling of homes in each of these two groups were invited to participate.

Residents of selected homes were mailed letters by MDHHS and contacted by phone to confirm their eligibility and enroll them in the assessment. MDHHS staff will soon be visiting selected homes that have not yet enrolled to drop off information about the assessment and how to participate. There are a limited number of planned dates left for selected residents to participate. If you received a letter or phone call from MDHHS and have not responded, MDHHS urges you to call 844-464-7327 to sign up before the assessment ends.

- MORE -

Although knowing your individual PFAS blood level will not predict or confirm any personal health problems, this study will provide much needed data the state can use to assess the impact of drinking water levels on human blood levels, and over time, perhaps contribute to the greater understanding of PFAS-related health issues at the population level.

PFAS have been used globally during the past century in manufacturing, firefighting foam and thousands of common household and other consumer products. These chemicals are persistent in the environment and in the human body – meaning they don't break down and can accumulate over time. In recent years, experts have become increasingly concerned by the potential effects of high concentrations of PFAS on human health. Given the widespread use of PFAS, most humans and animals have some amount of PFAS in their blood, even without exposure directly to contaminants from a specific hazardous site. The public health implications of consuming elevated levels of PFAS are being studied worldwide.

MDHHS and KCHD are working with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Agency for Toxic Substances Disease Registry, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the EGLE to investigate PFAS contamination in the county.

For more information about PFAs and the State of Michigan's PFAS response, visit the Michigan PFAS Action Response Team website [Michigan.gov/pfasresponse](https://Michigan.gov/pfasresponse).

# # #