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## **MDHHS recommends Michiganders to avoid foam on waterbodies**

LANSING, Mich. – As the weather warms up, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) recommends that Michiganders and visitors avoid foam on Michigan waterbodies such as lakes, rivers and streams.

Foam can form on any waterbody, and sometimes foam can have harmful chemicals in it. This can include high levels of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). PFAS-containing foam tends to be bright white in color, lightweight and may pile up along shores or blow onto beaches. [An MDHHS evaluation](#) suggests young children who come into contact with PFAS-containing foam for a few hours a day may be more at risk of negative health effects. Some studies in people have shown that higher PFAS exposure is linked to higher cholesterol and thyroid disease.

Natural foam without PFAS is usually off-white and/or brown in color, often has an earthy or fishy scent, and tends to pile up in bays, eddies or at river barriers such as dams.

If you do come in contact with foam, MDHHS recommends that you rinse off or bathe as soon as possible. This is especially true if the waterbody has suspected PFAS contamination. Coming into contact with foam without rinsing off or bathing can lead to accidentally swallowing foam or foam residue.

“Studies have shown that the risk of PFAS getting into your body from skin contact is low, but you can accidentally swallow PFAS or other chemicals and bacteria if you do not rinse off or bathe after coming into contact with foam,” said Dr. Natasha Bagdasarian, MDHHS chief medical executive. “Washing your hands and rinsing off after water activities can protect you from chemicals or bacteria that may be in water or foam.”

The science around PFAS is still developing. MDHHS works with local health departments to issue recommendations and health advisories for foam on waterbodies. Health advisories have been issued for some waterbodies where PFAS-containing foam has been found. These advisories can be found in the “PFAS Foam on Lakes and Streams” section of the [Michigan PFAS Action Response Team Website](#). MDHHS continues to review data on PFAS-containing foam as it is available and will issue advisories as needed.

The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) also recommends that people do not allow their animals to come into contact or swallow foam on waterbodies. If animals do come in contact with foam, they should be rinsed off and bathed with fresh water as foam can build up in animal fur. Animal owners with questions related to animals and foam ingestion should contact their veterinarian.

Anyone with questions about exposure to PFAS or foam can call the MDHHS Environmental Health hotline at 800-648-6942. More information is available on the [MPART website](#).

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