

Perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS): European Food Safety Authority draft opinion opens for public consultation

The European Authority has derived health-based guidance values for PFAS

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Perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are industrial chemicals that have been used for decades in several industrial processes and consumer products due to their special technical properties. They are not easily degradable, and are now detectable everywhere – in the environment, in the food chain, and in humans. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has published a draft opinion on the health risks due to the occurrence of PFAS in food. In accordance with EFSA's guidelines for public consultation, anyone can express an opinion publicly.

<https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/news/pfas-public-consultation-draft-opinion-explained>

In its current draft opinion, EFSA has derived a tolerable weekly intake (TWI) of 8 nanograms (ng) per kilogram (kg) of body weight per week for the sum of four PFAS, namely perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS), perfluorohexane sulfonic acid (PFHxS) and perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA). This value indicates the weekly amount that is not expected to cause any impairment of human health from life-long intake. The current derivation is based on observations in epidemiological studies that have shown lower concentrations of vaccine antibodies in humans with higher concentrations of PFAS.

The BfR will comment on the EFSA draft opinion.

Consumers can barely influence their intake of PFAS. Humans absorb them primarily via food and drinking water.

As early as December 2018, EFSA published a re-evaluation of health risks posed by certain PFAS in food and derived significantly lower guidance values for two compounds (PFOS and PFOA) than before.

More information on the BfR website on perfluorinated and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS):

New health-based guidance values for the industrial chemicals PFOS and PFOA:

<https://www.bfr.bund.de/cm/349/new-health-based-guidance-values-for-the-industrial-chemicals-pfos-and-pfoa.pdf>

More information on the topic in German:

https://www.umweltbundesamt.de/sites/default/files/medien/360/publikationen/pfas_lebensmittelkette.pdf

<https://www.springermedizin.de/persistente-organische-kontaminanten-in-lebensmitteln/12332162?fulltextView=true>

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00103-017-2583-0>



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