

OUR STORY

Merrimack, NH is an EPA designated PFAS contamination site. PFAS have been documented in both public water supplies and private wells. Public water serves 25,500 of our approximated 27,000 residents and DES ordered the closing of 2 of the 6 public water supply wells last year for testing over the state regulatory limit of 70ppt combined PFOA/PFOS. Residents were exposed approximately 10-20 years prior to discovery and continue to have exposure through water use.

Ongoing water testing of public water has shown varying levels of these chemicals. DES has stated that a good part of this contamination has been attributed to air emissions of PFAS use at the Saint Gobain facility. Currently, the various formulas of shorter chain chemicals over the last decade have not been disclosed by St Gobain and are not being considered in our concerns. PFOA and PFOS were used prior to the replacement chemicals of the same class. The replacement chemicals are claimed as proprietary blends and include such chemicals as Gen-X.

According to a recent community health survey, residents who have public water and live in areas where private wells showed the presence of PFAS are more likely to report diagnoses associated with PFAS exposure. A random blood sampling study conducted by DHHS has shown that individuals who use public water closer to the Saint Gobain facility have higher levels of PFOA in their blood serum. PFOA has a half-life of 92 years in groundwater and plumes will be drawn to wells with more use.

Currently there are 21 houses with private wells in Merrimack that have tested above the state limit of 70ppt for PFOA. These wells additionally show the presence of other PFAS that are currently not regulated, thus haven't received the attention they should be getting. Residents of these homes have been told not to drink their water and must rely on bottled water. Private well owners abutting these homes have recently been provided bottled water. According to DES mapping there are 50 additionally known private wells that test over 20ppt for PFOA alone in a variety of locations in Merrimack.

In addition to removing the chemicals from drinking water and regulating the air emissions that are the stated main pathway for chemical contamination in the Merrimack area, our residents are in need of health support. In 2005 the EPA labeled PFCs as a carcinogen, they are also acknowledged to be endocrine disrupters and the C8 study in 2012 resulted in DuPont acknowledging causality for various health conditions that are present in this community.

Individuals in Merrimack have found their physicians to be uninformed and a check with various visible health practices in the area last year found that none of them were familiar with the health risks in this area. Due to the lack of support for our health needs, residents have had to support one another by organizing, giving out links to physician health monitoring sheets, reaching out to academic resources and other impacted communities, presenting concerns to our town officials who had only as their guidance dated EPA information and many other activities such as designing a health survey to gather our own data.

Simply stated, we are a community that DES identifies as having chemical exposure via air, water and soil between 10-20 years. Current exposure to additional PFAS is present but not quantified at this time. We are in need of both support to our health needs and academic study as well as remediation of our water supplies. Our observations have noted a reluctance to examine impacts of PFAS to our health despite the persistent nature and bio-accumulative qualities of this chemical class.

COMMUNITY NEEDS:

- Blood test access
- Water filtration to stop consumption of PFAS
- Air emissions regulations and testing
- Remediation of all impacted private wells
- More Protective Regulatory water standards that consider the combination of all PFAS chemicals
- Physician education and support
- Community education and support
- A Health monitoring program to assist the scientific community about the health effects of PFAS chemicals
- Coordination of DHHS, DES and community health data to better understand pathways and impact of PFAS exposure
- An ATSDR community health consultation and recommendation
- Polluters Pay Laws

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