



# SAFER FOOD PACKAGING-PFAS



## WHAT IS PFAS?

Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) are a class of chemicals used since the 1950s to make consumer products grease and water-resistant. PFAS do not break down easily and can thus remain in our bodies for years. In the environment (air and water), they can last for millions of years.

## HOW CAN I AVOID PFAS IN FOOD PACKAGING

- Avoid microwave popcorn and greasy foods wrapped in paper.
- Take fast food out of its wrapper or containers as soon as possible.
- Transfer food to glass, porcelain or microwave-safe pottery plates before heating leftovers in the microwave.
- Ask to skip the paper or paperboard wrapper and have your food packaged in a paper bag (research indicates that PFAS are not found in outer paper bags that do not come in contact with food).

## HOW COULD I GET EXPOSED?

PFAS are often used in grease-proof food wrappers including pizza boxes, microwave popcorn bags, burger or sandwich wrappers and other take-out containers.

PFAS in packaging can leach into food and drink, where they can be ingested. Studies shows that over 90% of the population have detectable levels of these chemicals in our blood. Up to half of all paper wrappers and 20% of all paperboard/cardboard containers may contain PFAS. Although 3 different PFAS have been banned for use in food packaging by the FDA, many others (not yet well-tested but also suspected of causing health problems) are not subject to regulations.



## WHAT ARE THE HEALTH EFFECTS OF PFAS?

In children, studies have revealed associations between increased exposure to PFAS and high cholesterol levels, asthma, decreased vaccine response, decreased kidney function and developmental effects. Additional studies of adult populations have associated PFAS with ulcerative colitis, thyroid disease, and kidney and testicular cancer.

\*\*You cannot tell by sight, touch or smell whether a food wrapper or container has PFAS in it. There also is no labeling requirement for food packaging and PFAS.



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