



EPA New Health Advisory for PFOA and PFOS

Talking Points

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 First: What you need to know
- 2 What is a health advisory?
- 3 How is Stuart impacted?
- 4 What action is the City taking?
- 5 How am I affected?
- 6 What else should I know?
- 7 Where to go for more information

First: What you need to know

On May 19, 2016 the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released a new drinking water health advisory for health risks associated with a lifetime exposure to perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS), which are organic compounds that have been historically used in carpets, clothing, food packaging and a number of industrial processes. Although not regulated by the EPA, these chemicals were included in an EPA monitoring program during 2013-2015 because of potential health concerns due to long-term exposure. The City of Stuart and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) have been working together on EPA's recommendations following the release of this new health advisory.

What is a health advisory?

EPA health advisories are based on the best available peer-reviewed science, including lab and epidemiological studies, regarding exposure to certain chemicals and compounds. Health advisories are precautionary statements to inform people of the long-term risks associated with certain chemicals. An example is the precautionary statement on the risk of liver damage due to exposure to high levels of acetaminophen found in products like Tylenol. EPA's new health advisory for drinking water is based on a lifetime exposure for PFOA and PFOS and offers a margin of protection to even the most sensitive populations. It is also protective for both cancerous and non-cancerous health effects.

How is Stuart impacted?

Before May 19 the City of Stuart utility system was not under a health advisory as the City water quality results were always below the provisional health advisory levels that EPA established in 2009 for PFOA and PFOS. When EPA issued the new advisory, it lowered this number to a combined total for the two compounds of *70 parts per trillion*. As a result, the City of Stuart and several other utilities in EPA's southeast region (Region 4) had levels that were above the new combined health advisory. Both the DEP and EPA began working with the City on this issue.

"For more information on EPA Health Advisories, regulations, PFOA, and PFOS please visit: <https://www3.epa.gov/>"

What action is the City taking?

While the EPA's new health advisory took most states and local utilities by surprise, the City of Stuart has already taken proactive measures to respond to EPA's recommendations and to provide City residents with more accurate information. With additional EPA and DEP guidance, the City of Stuart expedited new sampling at the point of entry to the water distribution system. These samples were subsequently hand-delivered to a licensed lab that later determined concentrations of PFOA and PFOS lower than the new health advisory.

As a result of the quick confirmation sampling, the City of Stuart is pleased that the latest results are below the new EPA health advisory. However, City staff is taking more proactive measures to further reduce any measurable levels of these contaminants in order to provide the best drinking water possible for our residents.

How am I affected?

As a result of the most recent samples indicating contaminant levels below 70 parts per trillion, residents do not need to take any actions relating to the EPA health advisory. PFOA and PFOS are organic compounds that when consumed at higher levels over a lifetime may lead to cancer and various other potential developmental, liver, immune and thyroid issues, as well as other health effects such as cholesterol changes. The new EPA health advisory establishes the 70 parts per trillion maximum as a means of providing even the most sensitive populations with a margin of protection from a lifetime of exposure to PFOA and PFOS in drinking water. Stuart's most recent samples have indicated levels below this number, which do not warrant any further response.

What else should I know?

EPA's assessment indicates that drinking water with individual or combined concentrations of PFOA and PFOS below 70 parts per trillion is not expected to result in adverse health effects over a lifetime of exposure. While the City has already appropriately responded to the new EPA health advisory, Stuart is taking additional proactive measures to identify causes for the past levels of PFOA and PFOS concentrations and remains dedicated to providing the safest potable water for our residents.

Where to go for more information

For more information on EPA Health Advisories, regulations, PFOA and PFOS please visit: <https://www3.epa.gov/>.