

# News Release



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## **Project finds decline in PFC blood levels in east metro residents**

*Results indicate that efforts to reduce drinking water exposures to PFCs are working*

Results from a follow-up biomonitoring pilot project that measured levels of perfluorochemicals (PFCs) in the blood of east metro residents and compared them to the same individuals' levels from 2008 finds that blood levels of PFCs in the communities studied are decreasing and that efforts to reduce drinking water exposure to PFCs in the East Metro have been effective.

The follow-up project, conducted by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), found that, on average, blood levels of three PFCs declined substantially in the community since 2008: individual levels of PFOS went down by 26 percent, PFOA by 21 percent, and PFHxS by 13 percent. These decreases are similar to those in other exposed communities.

MDH's 2008 pilot project measured PFC levels in adults who lived in Oakdale, Lake Elmo, and Cottage Grove, where the drinking water has been found to contain PFCs. Since the initial discovery of PFCs in drinking water, efforts have been made to eliminate or reduce the levels of PFCs in drinking water to below health-based exposure limits in these communities. Large carbon filtration units were installed at the city of Oakdale's water treatment plant. About 290 homes with private wells in the area affected by contamination were either connected to city water or were provided with carbon filtration devices. MDH continues to test wells to be sure that water levels are below health-based exposure limits.

"The results we're seeing in the reduction of PFCs in blood levels in the east metro are a clear testament to what can be accomplished with collaboration among state agencies, local government, business and citizens," said Minnesota Health Commissioner Dr. Edward Ehlinger. "The interventions put in place to lower PFC levels in drinking water in these communities are working and reducing people's exposures. While these results are encouraging, we would like to see the levels continue to decline. We expect that will occur."

The results will be presented in a public meeting in Oakdale on Dec. 12. There will be an open house before the meeting and time for residents to ask questions during and after the meeting. (A complete schedule of the meeting is included at the end of this news release).

For the follow-up project, health scientists re-contacted participants from the 2008 pilot project and asked them to give another blood sample. MDH's Public Health Laboratory measured the levels of seven PFCs in the blood of 164 people who agreed to participate. Individual results were mailed to participants, along with information on how their levels compared to others in the study and to the national average.

**-more-**

Scientists still do not fully understand how PFCs affect human health. To date there are no published studies that provide clear evidence that PFCs increase the risk of human disease. While at this time there are no clinical reference values that medical providers can use for advising patients about “safe” and “unsafe” levels of PFCs in the body, MDH is reaching out to area clinics with information that will help them answer health risk questions from their patients. The project participants will also be able to contact an MDH physician to discuss their results.

MDH’s next step in the follow-up project is to study surveys that participants completed to learn more about ways that people are exposed to PFCs. MDH will also continue to review studies about possible human health effects of PFCs and communicate this information to the community.

Both PFC biomonitoring pilot projects stem from 2007 state legislation directing MDH to develop and implement a statewide Environmental Health Tracking and Biomonitoring (EHTB) program.

**For more information on the East Metro PFC Biomonitoring Pilot Project and its results, please see the MDH biomonitoring program website at:**

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/tracking/biomonitoring/projects/eastmetropfc.html>

**Meeting:**

Monday, Dec. 12, 2011

6-8 p.m.

Skyview Elementary

1100 Heron Ave. N.

Oakdale, MN 55128

**Meeting Agenda**

Open House, 6-7 p.m.

Presentation, 7-8 p.m., with time for questions and answers

MDH staff will be available for questions after the meeting

**-MDH-**

**EDITORS: East Metro PFC Biomonitoring Pilot Project coordinators and other MDH staff will be available to answer questions from media via telephone conference call at 1 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 6. For dial-in information, please contact [health.communications@state.mn.us](mailto:health.communications@state.mn.us), 651-201-4989.**