

Exposure to contaminated drinking water has the potential to harm your health. The health effects of contact with any hazardous substance depend on how much, for how long and the way in which you are exposed. The effects also depend on personal factors such as family history, overall health, and lifestyle.

What is GenX?

GenX is a member of a family of chemical compounds known as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). PFAS are human-made chemicals that do not occur naturally in the environment. These chemicals have broad uses in commercial products such as food packaging, nonstick coatings, and firefighting foam.

GenX is a trade name for one unregulated PFAS chemical compound used in manufacturing nonstick coatings and for other purposes. It is also produced as a byproduct of certain manufacturing processes.

How can I be exposed to GenX?

Groundwater (including well water) and surface water (including water from rivers, lakes and streams) may contain elevated levels of GenX and other PFAS. If this water is used as a drinking water source, people could be exposed to these compounds through drinking water.

There is not enough information about GenX to know if people in North Carolina are likely to be exposed through sources other than drinking water. People can be exposed to other types of PFAS in multiple ways, including through food, indoor dust, consumer products, and workplaces such as manufacturing facilities.

How can GenX affect my health?

There is limited information about the health effects of GenX. Laboratory studies on animals show negative effects to the liver and blood, along with cancer of the liver, pancreas, and testicles. The relevance to human health is unknown. The potential human health effects of many other new or emerging PFAS are unknown.

N.C. DHHS continues to work with federal partners to review all new health and toxicity information about these compounds as it becomes available.

What guidelines have been set for human health?

There are no federal health guidelines for GenX.

N.C. DHHS used available toxicity information to set a health goal for GenX in drinking water at 140 nanograms per liter (ng/L) or parts per trillion (ppt). A health goal is a non-regulatory, non-enforceable level of contamination below which no adverse health effects would be expected over a lifetime of exposure. This health goal may change as new information becomes available.

There is not enough information to develop health goals for many other new or emerging PFAS at this time.

Where can I find more information?

GenX Investigation:

<https://deq.nc.gov/news/hot-topics/genx-investigation>

Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS):

<https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/pfc/index.html>

<https://www.epa.gov/pfas>

Contact Information

If you have concerns about health effects related to GenX or other chemicals, contact N.C. DHHS at 919-707-5900.



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