

Human exposure to PFAS and their precursors in the environment and their biotransformation processes

INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

Investigators:

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*Please read the general information below and the attached document regarding **Informed Consent**. If you agree to participate in this study, the script in the consent document will be read to you over the phone during a recorded conversation with a member of the Research Team at the University of Queensland to obtain your consent for your participation.*

General Information

PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) are a group of manufactured chemicals that are present in the environment, in foods and food packaging, consumer products and in industrial applications including firefighting foam. Some communities and occupational groups in Australia have previously been exposed to elevated levels of PFAS contamination in the environment. This exposure to PFAS chemicals can occur through multiple pathways such as drinking water, consumption of food, inhalation of air, dust ingestion and skin contact with contaminated products but little is known about the role that air, dust and skin contact contribute to overall exposure. Understanding these pathways of exposure is essential so as to manage potential risks of contamination.

The current research study will describe PFASs in the environment and this will help us to understand the pathways that contribute to human exposure to PFASs.

You are invited to take part in a research project to be conducted by researchers at the University of Queensland and collaborators, and funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council.

What will my participation involve?

Your participation in the study will involve the completion of a questionnaire as well as the collection of air and dust samples at your home (once in warmer months and once in cooler months) and a single hand wipe sample from you.

The questionnaire will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Visits to your home to collect the air, dust and hand wipe samples will be scheduled at your convenience and will be conducted in accordance with any public health directives for COVID-19 in place at the time of the visits.

Air samples will be collected using a passive air sampler (PAS). Passive air samplers are noise free, do not require a power source and do not require any interaction from you. The air sampler would be deployed in a convenient position in your home over a sampling period of 21 days in each season (and collected again at the end of the 21 day sampling period).

Floor dust samples will be collected twice (once in warmer months and once in cooler months) using a clean nylon sampling sock with a vacuum cleaner. Hand wipe samples will be collected using a sterile gauze pad (soaked in isopropyl alcohol) to both hands.

While not intrusive, the collection of the samples will require visits to your home on four occasions for an approximate duration of 30 minutes each visit.

To thank you for your participation and to recognise the time you have spent completing the questionnaire, you will receive **\$40 in Coles Myer gift cards** (1 per household) at the conclusion of your participation.

How do you benefit from this study?

There will be **no immediate personal benefit** to you from this study. The main benefit of this study is to provide knowledge about exposure pathways that will assist us to better understand PFASs exposure, to evaluate the level of success of the current measures being used to control exposure to PFASs in communities, and to understand the factors that may influence the exposure to PFASs.

Will I be told the results of the study?

Towards the conclusion of the study (approximately end of 2024) you will receive an individualised report of PFAS concentrations present in your home and from your hand wipe sample. This will be reported with information to help you understand these results including an average of other samples collected and comparisons with international research.

Once the research findings have been finalised, a report that summarises these findings will be available. This will be reported at a planned community forum (depending on COVID-19 restrictions) and will be sent to all participants.

Will the information you give be confidential?

Your information will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. All information will be coded when it is collected. Your coding details will be stored separately. All personal information from the consent form will be kept securely and separately from the other material. Your completed questionnaire and the collected samples will be stored as de-identified information. Although the outcome of the study will be reported at the conclusion of the study and may be published in the scientific literature,

neither your identity nor your individual results will be revealed. Your participation in the study and your results will remain confidential.

Do you need to take part in this study?

Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate in this research study and may choose to withdraw your consent at any time and at any point in the study.

Are there any possible risks?

There are limited risks associated with this study. The use of the small amount of isopropyl alcohol in the one-off collection of the hand wipe sample is not expected to cause any irritation to the skin unless you have an existing skin condition such as contact dermatitis. We will ask you about any existing skin conditions at the time of consent. If you decide to take part, you will be encouraged to wash your hands with soap and water at the conclusion of the hand wipe sample collection.

What if I change my mind?

If you do consent to participate but later wish to withdraw this consent, you can do so by contacting the study team by phone on 1800 370 760 or by email to PFASPathwaysStudy@uq.edu.au. We will destroy any information about you that was collected during your participation (i.e. any results, samples or data), unless you want us to keep it.

What will happen to my samples at the end of the study?

With your consent, when the study is completed, the collected samples of indoor air, dust and your hand wipe sample will be stored for future research on pollutants. If you **do not** wish your samples to be stored for future testing, then this will be recorded when you give your verbal or written consent. If you **change your mind**, you can withdraw your consent to participate at any time and request that your samples be destroyed. Your results will remain confidential at all times. You will **not** receive any results from future testing of the samples after this study is concluded.

Contacts

This study adheres to the Guidelines of the ethical review process of The University of Queensland and the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. While you are free to discuss your participation in this study with our project staff (Principal Investigator Dr Fisher X. Wang; telephone on (07) 3346 1899 or 1800 370 760; or by email x.wang18@uq.edu.au or PFASPathwaysStudy@uq.edu.au). If you would like to speak to an officer of the University not involved in the study, you may contact the Ethics Coordinators on (07) 3365 3924 or email humanethics@research.uq.edu.au.

INFORMED CONSENT from participants for their participation
– this verbal script will be read to you over the phone

I, _____ (*your full name*), have read the Participant Information Sheet.

- I have been given the opportunity by research staff to ask questions about the project and about my participation.
- I understand that my participation in the study will involve the completion of a brief questionnaire and the collection of air and dust samples at my home at two times (once in warmer months and once in cooler months) as well as a hand wipe sample from myself.
- I have been informed of the potential risks to my health and well-being related to this research.
- I understand that my personal information from my questionnaire and the results of my hand wipe sample will be kept confidential.
- I understand that a copy of the results from the samples collected from my home and myself will be sent to me.
- I agree that samples collected from my home and myself will be used for the purposes of this research and that any residual sample may be stored for future work on environmental pollutants, but that I will not receive any results related to any future testing.
- I acknowledge that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without comment or penalty.

Do you agree to participate in the Study of PFAS Exposure Pathways *Participant response*

This consent was given by, _____ (*your full name*), to _____ (*name of staff member from UQ*) for the University of Queensland.