

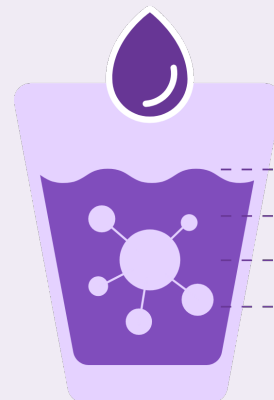
Place-Based Exposures: Water Pollution

Place-based chemical exposures disproportionately affect already over-burdened populations based on socioeconomic status or race/ethnicity. Communities that already lack access to clean water, are in intentionally food-deprived areas, and lack safe spaces for physical activity, are also likely in close proximity to potentially toxic industries.

Science Summary

Numerous studies demonstrate that industrial contamination of drinking water supplies is linked to increased breast cancer risk. Chemicals such as tetrachloroethylene, benzene, and vinyl chloride, which are still used in various industrial operations, can leach into groundwater and expose nearby residents who drink or shower with this contaminated water.

One example of this connection is the contaminated water at the Marine Corps base at Camp Lejeune, NC. The base drinking water was contaminated with industrial solvents, including tetra- and trichloroethylene, from 1953 to 1987. This exposure resulted in an increased incidence of several cancers, including male breast. Male breast cancer is extremely rare, yet over 70 cases of the disease have been associated with water at Camp Lejeune.



Tetrachloroethylene

Benzene

PFAS

Vinyl Chloride

“Every human being has the right to safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water adequate for human consumption, cooking, and sanitary purposes.”

California’s Human Right to Water Law

What can I do for my own body and health?

You can learn about potential exposures in your municipal water supply by checking your water quality report from your water district. You can also screen for environmental justice factors here:

<https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/>

If you are concerned about your water quality, purchase a water filter to remove the contaminants.

Do all you can to stop using harmful pesticides and cleaning products in your own home that can pollute water supplies.

Unless recommended by your municipality, refrain from purchasing bottled water as the plastic may leach harmful chemicals such as phthalates, which are linked to breast cancer.

What can I do to support the health of my family and friends, and my community?

Share this information about water quality with your family and friends so they feel empowered to improve their own water to the best of their ability.

“I really just wanted to make an observation and that is that I actually live right next to the oil fields here in Los Angeles. I specifically remember feeling and smelling a huge difference in the water quality when they started doing the fracking in this area.”

**Stephanie from the Breast Cancer Plan
Community Listening Session**

How can I navigate and get support with any systemic barriers to my health?

Everyone has the right to safe drinking water, and policymakers have a responsibility to protect us from dangerous contaminants, including forever PFAS chemicals that have been found in the drinking water of millions of people across the U.S.

How can I help advocate for and support systemic change to remove barriers to health?

Here are some ways we can take systems-level action to reduce breast cancer risk:



Call on the US EPA, state legislatures, and State and Regional Water Boards to expand the list of contaminants to be tracked and regulated to include a broader list of chemicals linked to breast cancer.



Support local and regional efforts to promote residential, municipal, and industrial water conservation and protection.



Work with agriculture and state/local agencies to adopt aggressive measures to reduce agricultural water pollution from pesticides, fertilizer, and livestock operations.



Create training opportunities for community members to collect high-quality data on air, soil, and water quality, which can be used to enforce pollution prevention measures.



Prohibit contaminated wastewater from fossil fuel drilling (for example, fracking) from being used to irrigate crops.

**TOGETHER, WE CAN
MAKE CHANGE!**



Learn more and get involved.

Breast Cancer Prevention Partners (BCPP) is the leading science-based advocacy organization working to prevent breast cancer by eliminating our exposure to toxic chemicals and other environmental exposures linked to the disease.

