



Purchasing Safer Compostable Food Service Ware

HOW TO AVOID FLUORINATED CHEMICALS

What are fluorinated chemicals?

Chemicals known as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (“PFAS”) constitute a class of over 3,000 fluorinated chemicals that persist in the environment for a very long time. The most studied chemicals in the class, PFOA and PFOS, have been associated with cancer, developmental toxicity, immunotoxicity, and other health effects. The vast majority of other PFAS have little to no data demonstrating their safety and available studies indicate similar health concerns.

PFAS are highly persistent, ubiquitous, and can migrate into food from packaging and food service ware. Upon disposal, PFAS can contaminate drinking water, compost, and agricultural crops. For more information about the human health and environmental hazards of PFAS, see the [Cancer-Free Economy Network’s PFAS Hazards Factsheet](#).

Manufacturers of disposable food packaging and food service ware often add PFAS to impart moisture, oil, and grease resistance. PFAS are also added to fabrics, carpets, furniture, clothing, and fire-fighting foams for their non-stick, lubricating, waterproof, stain-resistant, and oil and grease resistant properties.

As a purchaser, you can protect your health and the health of the communities you serve by purchasing PFAS-free food service ware products.

What products contain PFAS?

PFAS are added to paper and fiber products, including:



bowls



take-out and soup containers



plates



clamshells



food trays, boats, and scoops



deli and portion cups



boxes, such as for pizza and pastries



Bags, wrappers, bakery liners such as muffin papers and sandwich bags

Often, brands do not know if PFAS are added to their products, because the chemicals are added by a supplier of their raw materials. In addition, manufacturers can sometimes sell products that contain fluorinated chemicals under the same brand name as products that do not. Currently, the best ways to know if a product you are using contains PFAS are to [consult this report of independent testing of food service ware products](#) by the Center for Environmental Health, ask the supplier for test results from an independent lab demonstrating lack of fluorine, or get the product tested yourself or with the help of the Center for Environmental Health.

What alternatives exist that are safer for us and our families?

To ensure we live and work in clean, safe, and healthy environments, you can purchase disposable food service ware that is made without PFAS. Avoid molded fiber products because all currently contain PFAS, and use one of the alternative materials available such as products by the following manufacturers:

MATERIAL CATEGORY	BOWLS	TAKE-OUT & SOUP COUNTERAINERS	PLATES	CLAMSHELLS	TRAYS, BOATS, & SCOOPS	DELI & PORTION CUPS	BAGS, WRAPPERS & LINERS
PLA (biodegradable plastic)	GrowPlastics		GrowPlastics	Green Safe Products , World Centric , Eco-Products	GrowPlastics	World Centric , Eco-Products , GrowPlastics	
Bamboo	Bambu		Bambu				
Palm Leaf	Resposable, Leafware by BioMass Packaging		Resposable, Leafware by BioMass Packaging				

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Uncoated Paper	Contact paper manufacturers to find out what products are available. Manufacturers include Domtar under the Earthchoice brand, Expera Specialty Solutions under the Grease-Guard® FluoroFree® brand, Twin Rivers Paper Company under the Arcadia® ORG brand, and Nordic Paper under the Natural Greaseproof brand.						
PLA Coated Paper		Practiv's Earthchoice , Graphic Packaging International's Ecotainer® , Eco-Products® World Art™ , PrimeLink Solutions' PrimeWare® , Karat , Vegware , World Centric® , Bare® by Solo® Eco-Forward® by Dart Container Corporation			Eco-Products scoop		
Clay Coated Paper			Bare® by Solo® Eco-Forward® by Dart Container Corporation		Eco-Products tray/boat , Monogram		
BioWax Coated Paper							Ecowax® by Clondakin Group , Paraflex NoWax™ by Paramelt
Alternative Coated Paper (Unknown)	Dixie® and Dixie Ultra® by Georgia Pacific	Karat , Enshield Natural Kraft (ENK™) Paperboard by West Rock	Dixie® and Dixie Ultra® by Georgia Pacific, Cheeky , Designer by Greenbrier International, Dixie Basic® by Georgia Pacific , Nature's Own Green Label by AMJ Packaging Corp , Party! by Greenbrier International, Solo® by Dart Container Corporation , Ultra by Greenbrier International, Up & Up , Safeway's store brand Signature Home™, Value Corner, Walgreen's store brand Nice! , Original Heavyweights by AMJ Packaging Corporation				Enshield Natural Kraft (ENK™) Paperboard by West Rock , Ecocraft® by Green Safe Products , If you Care® , Delfort Thinbarrier® Eco and Delfort Thinbarrier® OGR Eco
Polyethylene Coated Paper		Solo by Dart Container Corporation			Dixie® Kant Leek® by Georgia Pacific		

What else should I consider beyond PFAS-free?

The absence of one known problematic chemical class is not the same as evidence that all ingredients in the product are safer for humans and the environment. To ensure the PFAS-free product you choose is truly safer, ask your supplier to evaluate the product using tools such as the [GreenScreen® for Safer Chemicals](#).

Consider the sustainability and toxicity of the materials used to make the product you purchase, as well as where the product will end up after use.

To reduce material consumption and waste generation, purchase durable and reusable food service ware when feasible. If single-use food service ware is unavoidable, choose a product that is compostable and purchased for use in a community that has a dedicated collection system and a commercial or community composting facility.

Alternatively, you can choose a recyclable plastic product for use in a community with a recycling facility that handles the type of plastic you are purchasing. Unfortunately, most recyclable plastic is made from petroleum and most plastic food service ware is not recycled. Use [this report](#) as a guide to consider other sustainability parameters when making purchasing choices.

Where can I learn more?

Visit [Clean Production Action](#) for more information about the hazards of fluorinated chemicals, alternative materials and coatings, and products you can purchase that are safer for us and our families. For assistance with procuring healthier food service ware, contact [Center for Environmental Health](#).

This fact sheet was created by the following organizations as part of the Collaborative Network for a Cancer Free Economy:



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