
Q&A

WHAT WAS FOUND?

- **What exactly was found in the fish in Lake Fiskville?**

As a result of work implementing the recommendations of the Professor Joy Report, CFA was advised in February 2013 that fish caught and tested from Lake Fiskville contained PFOS (Perfluorooctane Sulfonate).

- **What is PFOS?**

PFOS is a type of perfluoro chemical (PFC). PFOS and its derivatives are man-made chemicals and can be found in everyday products such as make-up, shaving cream, shampoos, textiles, denture cleaners, paper and packaging, carpets, and leather products. CFA used PFOS containing firefighting foams up until 2007.

- **How did PFOS end up in the fish at Lake Fiskville?**

The lake contains PFOS residues from the use of PFOS containing firefighting foams. These were used in hot fire training exercises at Fiskville up until 2007. PFOS in the water and sediments can enter the food chain in the lake (i.e. worms, crustaceans, and fish).

POSSIBLE EFFECTS

- **How are people generally exposed to PFOS?**

People can be exposed to PFOS through eating food and drinking water, and through the use of consumer products. PFOS is widely used in the human environment, and most people have low levels of PFOS in their blood. PFOS can remain in the body for some time.

Based on the limited information available, fish products seem to be one of the primary sources of human exposure to PFOS. It is the only PFC to accumulate to high levels in fish.

- **What are the potential health effects of PFOS on people?**

Advice regarding exposure to PFOS suggests that it enters the blood and remains for some time. At elevated concentrations it may change blood cholesterol and blood lipids, which are indicators of risk for cardiovascular disease.

There are also many lifestyle factors that can affect a person's blood cholesterol and lipid levels.

The US Environmental Protection Agency says "human studies to date are insufficient to determine with a sufficient degree of certainty that the effects are either exposure-related or adverse".



FISKVILLE

- **How might people have been exposed to PFOS at Fiskville?**

People may have been exposed to PFOS if they ate fish from Lake Fiskville or by coming into contact with the waters and the sediments of the lake or the dams.

- **Am I at risk if I have come into contact with the water or sediments at Fiskville?**

Advice from Cardno Lane Piper (specialist environmental consulting firm employed by CFA to implement the recommendations of the Professor Joy Report), and eminent toxicologist Dr Roger Drew, is that PFOS is poorly absorbed through the skin and incidental ingestion of surface water through swimming will not result in a significant exposure.

Therefore, anyone who may have been exposed to PFOS in the water or sediments from the dams or Lake Fiskville is unlikely to have elevated PFOS levels in their blood due to these activities and will have a negligible risk of any health effects.

Lake water is not used for firefighter training.

CFA switched to town mains water for training in June 2012.

- **Am I at risk from the firefighting foams we use today?**

As of 2007 CFA has only used firefighting foams from suppliers who have advised that their products do not contain PFOA or PFOS.

WHAT TO DO

- **What should I do if I have eaten fish from Lake Fiskville?**

If anyone is concerned and requires further information they should ring the Fiskville Hotline – **1800 628 616**.

People will be asked a series of questions which will help them determine if they may be at risk of having elevated PFOS levels in their blood from the consumption of fish from Lake Fiskville.

If it is determined that they may be at risk, their details will be collected and referred to CFA. They will then be contacted to make arrangements to have a blood test and, if required, follow-up Health Surveillance.



NEXT STEPS

- **What about other CFA training grounds? Have lakes / dams been tested there?**

As part of the implementation of Professor Joy's recommendations, CFA has commenced environmental site assessments at all its regional training campuses. This will include the testing of water and sediments in their dams and lakes.

- **Are you doing any other testing of fish on the Fiskville property or nearby areas?**

The current information on PFOS levels in fish from Lake Fiskville is from the analysis of only four fish. This information needs to be confirmed by analysing more fish from the lake and with different laboratories to further validate the information.

CFA has decided to take a precautionary approach and provide members with information that we have to date. We will keep everyone advised of the outcomes of further testing as it becomes available.

- **What are the immediate next steps CFA will be taking?**

Screening, health checks and/or blood testing are being offered to anyone who ate fish from Lake Fiskville. If required, people will be offered ongoing health surveillance.

A peer review process of the human health risk assessments will also be conducted to ensure we deliver accurate information and advice, and give as much certainty as possible to our people and their families.

CFA is also taking action to remove fish from Lake Fiskville.