

Healthier Food Serviceware Choices



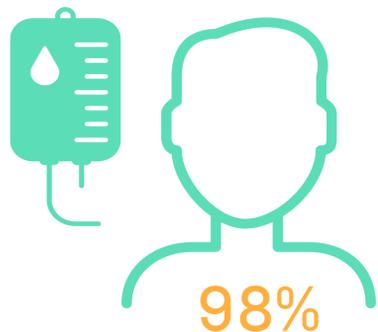
Single-use food containers are often treated with chemicals known as **PFAS (per and polyfluoroalkyl substances)** to make them water and grease resistant, but these chemicals are harmful to our health and should be avoided.



Why should I be concerned with PFAS?

PFAS are often called “**forever chemicals**” since they are hard to break down, clean up or remove, and can stay in the environment for thousands of years. They can migrate from foodware into food and stay in our bodies for many years.

Their popularity in **non-stick, grease-proof, and stain-resistant consumer products** has contributed to worldwide contamination.



PFAS are found in the blood of more than 98% of Americans.



PFAS contaminate our water, air, and the broader environment.



Health Problems from PFAS:

Exposure to certain PFAS is linked with **kidney cancer** and **testicular cancer**. Some studies have found a link between PFAS and **breast cancer**.

Other health effects include:

- Hormone disruption
- Damage to our immune system
- Thyroid disease
- Reduced growth hormones in children
- Increased cholesterol levels

February 2020



Avoid: Materials likely to contain PFAS

Molded fiber products should be avoided unless they are certified by the Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI)* or are listed as No/Low F in CEH's database.

These products are commonly made from wheat fiber, silver grass (Miscanthus), sugarcane waste (bagasse), and recycled paper. Before purchasing, check BPI's website and CEH's foodware database** to ensure that the product does not contain PFAS. Urge your suppliers to only carry PFAS-free products.

Examples of products to AVOID or approach with caution



Products pictured (from left to right): clamshells, food trays, plates, and bowls. The materials they can be made from vary. Materials pictured (from left to right): sugarcane, molded recycled paper, 2 different types of wheat fiber.

*As of 1/1/20, BPI-Certified products are "PFAS-free". See: products.bpiworld.org

Note: Also avoid polystyrene/polystyrene-foam products. See our FactSheet at: www.ceh.org/foodware



Prefer: Materials unlikely to contain PFAS

Products certified by BPI (as of 2020) and products made out of the following materials have consistently tested negative for fluorine, indicating no PFAS**:

BPI-certified molded fiber, bamboo, clay-coated paper or paperboard, clear PLA (polylactic acid), paper-lined with PLA, palm leaf, coated paper, and uncoated paper.



COMPOSTABLE
IN INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES

Check locally, as these do not exist in many communities. **Not suitable for backyard composting.** CERT # SAMPLE

Examples of products that do not typically contain PFAS:



Products pictured (from left to right): soup container, deli take-out container, plate, and food tray. The materials they can be made from vary. Materials pictured (from left to right): paper-lined with PLA, clear PLA, Bamboo, PLA foam.

** For more information, please refer to CEH's report and foodware database at www.ceh.org/foodware



Recommendations for PFAS-Free Foodware Options



REUSABLES ✓

The environmentally preferable foodware option.

Benefits of Reusables:

- Durability (less waste)
- Lower environmental impact
- No ongoing disposable purchasing and waste hauling fees. Once the pay-back period (Return on Investment) is reached, cost savings will accrue with every use of a reusable product.

Need Help Getting Started with Reusables?

Refer to Clean Water Action's Rethink Disposable Program (www.rethinkdisposable.org) which provides reusable consultation, tools and resources to implement cost-saving practices in food service.

Single Use Foodware

Single use foodware is inherently unsustainable; and there are concerns and trade-offs among even the compostable and recyclable products. If reusables are not viable, find products that do not contain PFAS through CEH's database and then check with your local jurisdiction* to determine whether they can and will properly compost or recycle these items.

Compostables

If you have commercial composting available, contact your local jurisdiction to determine whether the foodware products you are considering will be commercially composted. Choose BPI-Certified compostable products or find products in CEH's foodware database, which do not contain fluorinated additives.

Recyclables

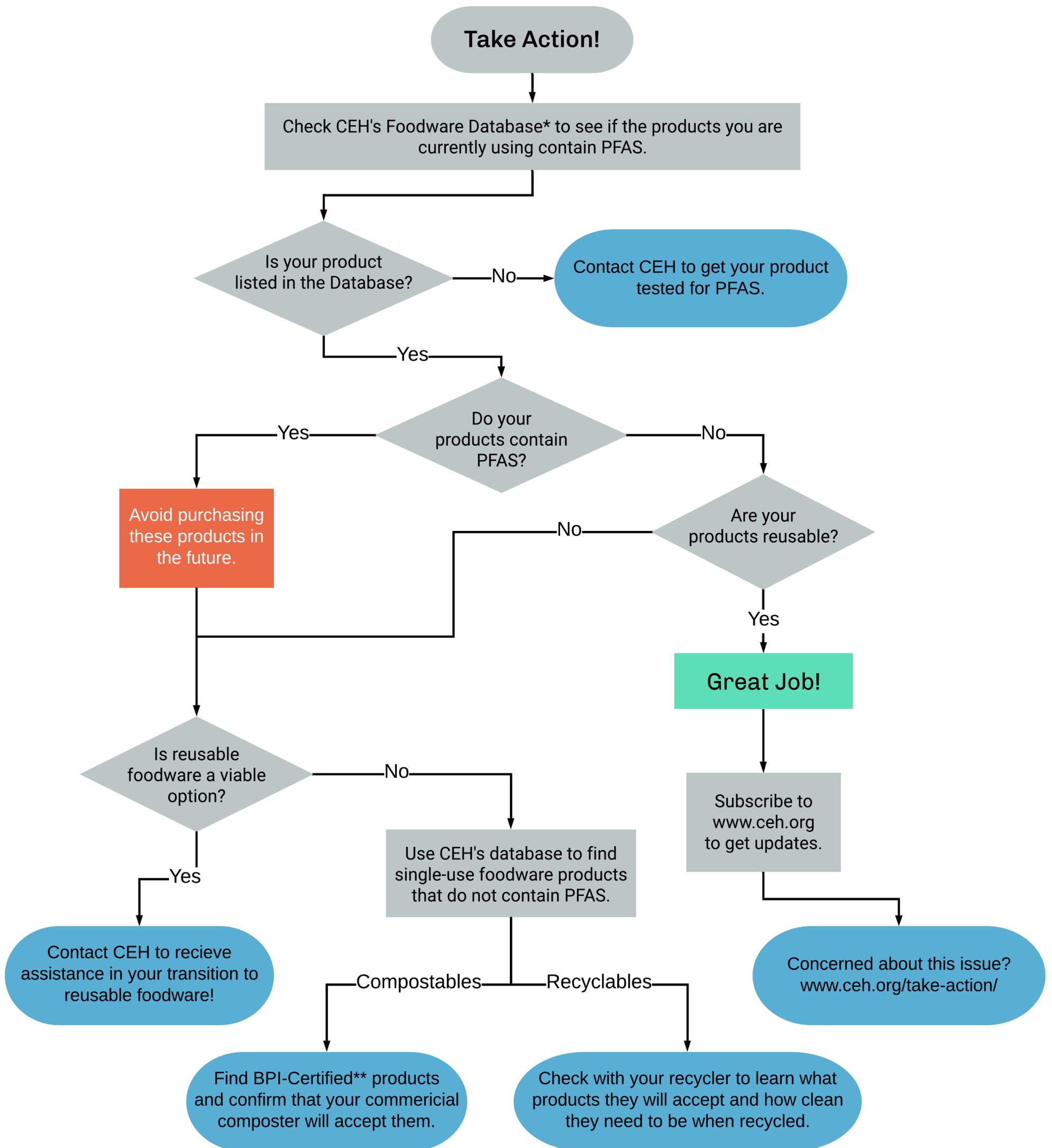
It is important to check with your local provider to confirm that they can recycle the products you are interested in and ask how much food residues are acceptable.



* Typically, the department responsible for managing solid waste, such as Public Works.



What can I do about PFAS?



* www.ceh.org/foodware

** <http://products.bpiworld.org/>