

FDA Announces End of PFAS Use in US Food Packaging

Article By:

Lianne Mantione

Charli Davis

On February 28, 2024, the Food and Drug Administration (“FDA”) published a [news release](#) regarding the voluntary market phase-out of per and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in grease-proofing substances used on food packaging. The FDA stated that the completion of this phase-out “eliminates the primary source of dietary exposure to PFAS from authorized food contact uses.”

PFAS are a group of chemicals that are used to make fluoropolymer coatings and products that resist heat, oil, stains, grease, and water, such as food packaging. As a result of cooperation between the FDA and PFAS manufacturers, long-chain PFAS compounds were removed from food contact use in the U.S. between 2011 and 2016. This led to the use of short-chain PFAS to fill the market gap in grease-coating food packaging that long-chain PFAS left behind.

The FDA’s [FY2018-FY2020 Total Diet Study](#) (“TDS”) monitored levels of certain PFAS in the general food supply, finding no PFAS in 97.6% of the fresh and processed foods tested. Beginning in 2019, the [FDA began obtaining data](#) for a post-market safety assessment of PFAS, including by testing almost 800 samples of food in the U.S. market, providing technical assistance to states to test food samples, and conducting human health assessments for individual PFAS detected in 174 of the federal and state samples. In 2020, the [FDA announced the voluntary phase-out](#) of one short-chain PFAS used in food packaging, 6:2 fluorotelomer alcohol (6:2 FTOH). The FDA engaged three manufacturers to agree to a 3-year phase-out of their sales of products containing 6:2 FTOH. The fourth and final manufacturer of such products informed the FDA it had already stopped sales of products containing 6:2 FTOH by that point.

The February 28, 2024, FDA announcement marks the fulfillment of the commitments manufacturers made in 2020 to cease sales for food contact use in the U.S. of grease-proofing substances that contain 6:2 FTOH. FDA has stated it will continue studies related to PFAS, as well as monitor the impact of phasing out 6:2 FTOH in food packaging. Squire will continue following these issues and report on any new developments.

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