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FDA Releases Results from Bottled Water PFAS Testing

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- FDA recently shared the final results from the testing of domestic and imported bottled water collected at retail locations across the U.S. for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). Of the 197 samples of purified, artesian, spring, and mineral waters tested, ten samples had detectable levels of PFAS. However, none of those had levels that would have exceeded the EPA's maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) for PFAS in public drinking water.
- PFAS are a diverse group of widely used, long lasting chemicals that do not easily break down and can accumulate in the environment and human tissues with negative health consequences. PFAS have been the subject of various testing efforts, lawsuits, and legislation.
- In the bottled water study, FDA tested for 18 types of PFAS, including the six types with EPA-established MCLs. The ten samples with detectable PFAS levels contained a range of one to four different PFAS in domestic samples and one to two different PFAS in imported samples. Of these, four PFAS were below EPA MCLs for drinking water, and two PFAS detected do not have established MCLs.
- The Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act requires FDA to establish a standard of quality regulation for contaminants in bottled water whenever the EPA establishes MCLs for public drinking water as part of a National Primary Drinking Water Regulation. If FDA does not establish a standard for the contaminants or finds that such standards are not necessary to protect public health, then the EPA levels are considered the applicable regulation for bottled water. FDA can then take action against bottled water that presents a safety concern even if there is no standard of quality for a contaminant.

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