

Healthier Food Serviceware Choices



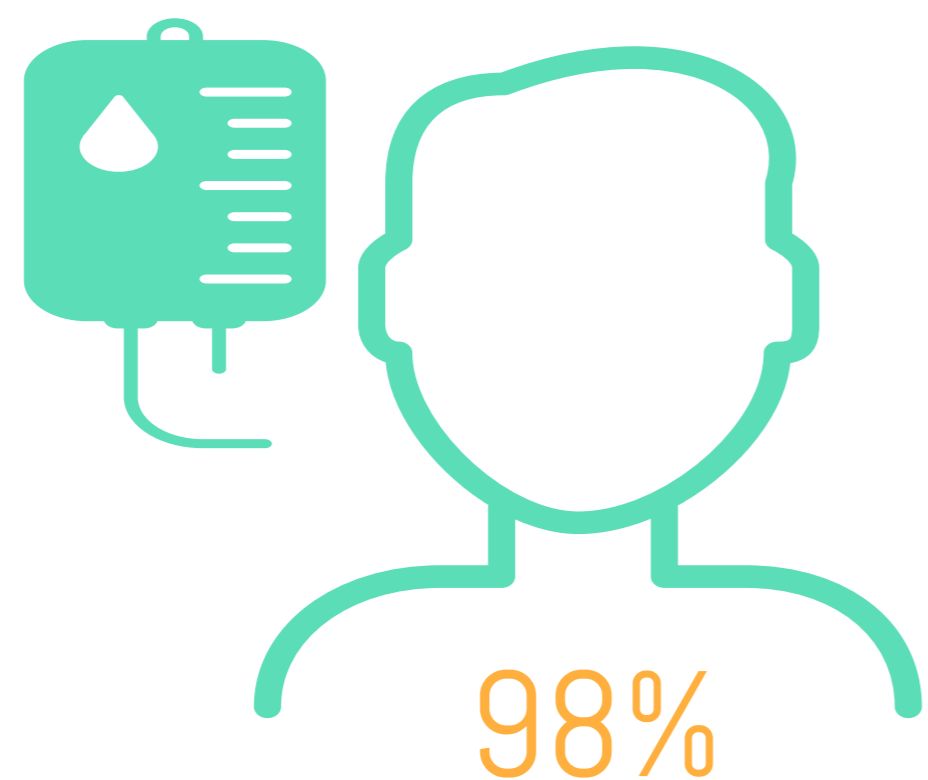
Single-use food containers are often treated with chemicals known as **PFAS (per and polyfluoroalkyl substances)** to make them water and grease resistant, but these chemicals are harmful to our health and should be avoided.



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

May 2019



Materials likely to contain PFAS

Avoid: All of the molded fiber products tested by CEH and other agencies consistently tested positive for fluorine, indicating the presence of PFAS.

These are products made of wheat fiber, blends of plant fibers, silver grass (miscanthus), sugarcane byproduct (bagasse), molded recycled paper, and PLA-lined molded sugarcane and should be **AVOIDED**.

Examples of products to AVOID at this time



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.

Note: Also avoid polystyrene/polystyrene foam products. Numerous other concerns are cited in CEH's report.

CEH anticipates the likely release of molded fiber products that do not contain PFAS in either late 2019 or early 2020 after the new BPI fluorine restrictions are in effect. To receive updates, email foodware@ceh.org.



Materials unlikely to contain PFAS

Prefer: Products made out of the following materials consistently tested negative for fluorine indicating no PFAS*:

Bamboo, clay-coated paper or paperboard, clear PLA (polylactic acid), paper-lined with PLA, palm leaf, paper with unknown coatings, and uncoated paper.

Examples of products that do not 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 our report at www.ceh.org/disposablefoodware



Recommendations for PFAS-Free Foodware Options



REUSABLES ✓

are 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** or Cedar Grove Accepted compostable products that do NOT contain fluorinated additives (by checking CEH's database at CEH.org/disposablefoodware)

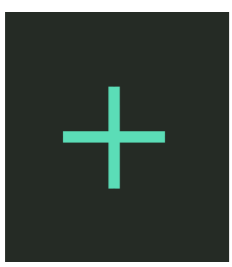
Recyclables

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.

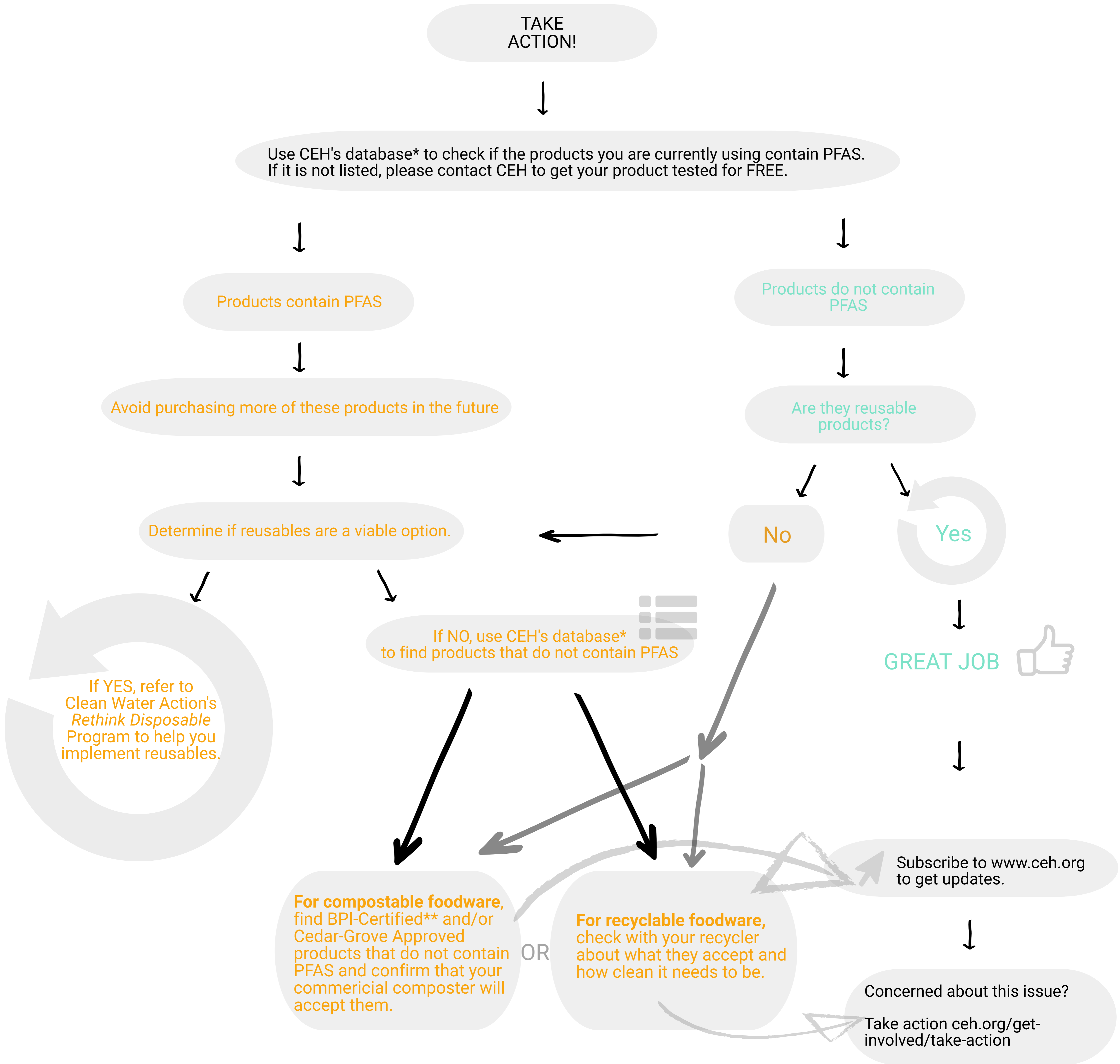


* Typically, the department responsible for managing solid waste, such as Public Works.

** By 01/01/20, all BPI-Certified products will be "free" of PFAS.



What can I do about PFAS?



* www.ceh.org/disposablefoodware

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