

Notice: PFAS in compostable ware

A recent report by the [Center for Environmental Health](#) suggests that [PFAS](#), a group of chemicals often used in food packaging, appears to be showing up in some food service ware and to-go packaging, including some compostable ware. That report suggests discontinuing the use of compostable “molded” fiber plates and clamshells (e.g. Chinet, World Centric molded fiber and similar materials) at this time due to the presence of PFAS.

The Biodegradable Products Institute, the third-party certification group for compostability standards, is requiring that ALL products be PFAS free by January 2020 if they are to maintain this third-party certification.

In the meantime, we want to make sure the U-M community is aware of alternative available options for compostable ware for event and kitchen use. The Center for Environmental Health provides an exhaustive [list of products](#) and their ratings in terms of PFAS composition. If you are currently purchasing compostable “molded” fiber plates or bowls for daily kitchen use, we are happy to help you find the available alternatives that [may be purchased through mMarketsite](#).

If you have an existing stock of the molded-fiber plates or bowls that you would like to discontinue use of, we recommend the following:

- Unopened cases can often be returned to the distributor.
- Opened cases or sleeves should be disposed of in the landfill bin. The Office of Campus Sustainability will replace these items with alternative available products. Please use [this form](#) to request replacements.

There are a number of reusable dishware options available on mMarketsite. Please let us know if you need help finding these items.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Why should I be concerned about PFAS?

PFAS are often called “forever chemicals” because they are difficult to break down and can stay in the environment for thousands of years. They can migrate from food ware into food and into our bodies and stay there for many years. They are common in non-stick, grease-proof and stain-resistant consumer products. Exposure to certain PFAS has been linked to kidney cancer, testicular cancer, and perhaps breast cancer. Other concerns are hormone disruptions, damage to the immune system, and reduced growth hormones in children. The Center for Environmental Health has [more information](#).

Q. What products should be discontinued?

The Center for Environmental Health suggests discontinuing the use of “molded” fiber products (e.g. Chinet, World Centric molded fiber and similar materials) and polystyrene at this time due to the presence of PFAS. You can read the full report here:

<https://www.ceh.org/wp-content/uploads/CEH-Disposable-Foodware-Report-final-1.31.pdf>

Q. What should I do if I have these products?

If you have an existing stock of the molded-fiber plates or bowls:

- Unopened cases can often be returned to the distributor.
- Opened cases or sleeves should be disposed of in the landfill bin. The Office of Campus Sustainability will replace these items with alternative available products. Please use [this form](#) to request replacements.

Q. Where can I find the recommended alternative products?

U -M has a number of alternative options available on mMarketsite. The Office of Campus Sustainability has developed a [spreadsheet](#) to help identify items which are compostable. This list has been updated with input from the Center for Environmental Health report.

In addition, the Center for Environmental Health provides an exhaustive [list of products](#) and their ratings.