



Water, Water in Headlines Everywhere

By Gerard L. Guillory, M.D.

Perhaps nowhere is the flood of confusing and contradictory health information today greater and louder than in matters concerning water.

My advice: Do some homework regarding water-filtration systems and buy one that is affordable and that will remove heavy metals and other contaminants from the water you drink at home. Don't forget to change the filters as required.

I also recommend drinking eight to 10 glasses of water daily. This should be sufficient for most people who engage in light to moderate physical activity during the day.

Beyond this, however, things are murky.

In 2006, Americans spent more than \$15 billion on bottled water—artesian water, mineral water, sparkling water, spring water and purified water. What they have been getting for their money is the subject of increasingly heated debate.

Critics say that 25 percent to 40 percent of the bottled water sold in the United States today is just purified tap water and that more than three-fourths of the bottles wind up in landfills. That's nearly 2 billion pounds of trash a year. The energy required to bottle and transport the water compounds this serious environmental problem.

Advocates of bottled water, however, say that leading brands undergo extensive filtration and purification processes that would be difficult and costly to replicate at home. Although municipalities routinely test the water they provide to the public, testing is usually done at the treatment plant and/or at other key points in the public distribution system, but not at one of the most important points along the way: your home.

If you live in an older home that has older pipes, the quality of the water may be worth considering. And if you have foul-tasting or contaminated water, you well know that there's nothing more welcome than a big chilled bottle of filtered and purified water.

We all agree that water—wherever and however you get it—is of crucial importance. Two-thirds of the planet is covered with it, and no human being can live more than a few days without it. If you don't drink sufficient water, you are likely to experience low-grade dehydration with non-specific symptoms such as headache and mental fatigue.

Water flushes toxic waste from your body, much as the water in a plumbing system eliminates waste from the system. Water also transports nutrients and regulates body temperature and muscle tone. These processes help quell the fires of chronic inflammation, which contributes to premature aging and other serious health problems.

While the debate about bottled versus tap water continues to boil, you can buy a home-filtration or purification system that will help ensure that the water you drink is of higher quality than what comes directly from the tap. You also can avoid contributing to the environmental problems associated with bottled water.

Again, do some homework and select an affordable filtration system that will eliminate heavy metals. Some experts recommend a system that, in addition to filtering the water, can monitor and regulate the pH level.

Meanwhile, the research and the debate will continue, and I will update you as we get greater clarity.

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