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Title:
Bottled Drinking Water – Pure Or Impure?

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Summary:
Some people think it is foolish to buy bottled drinking water, and ask, “Why pay for water in bottles when you can get it from your kitchen faucet?” Others prefer having choices in drinking water. They want to know what is going into their bodies, they say. To that, the faucet-water drinkers counter, “Have you ever run tests on your faucet water and your bottled drinking water?

Whichever way you think, you should choose your drinking water carefully. You may even want to r...

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Article Body:
Some people think it is foolish to buy bottled drinking water, and ask, “Why pay for water in bottles when you can get it from your kitchen faucet?” Others prefer having choices in drinking water. They want to know what is going into their bodies, they say. To that, the faucet-water drinkers counter, “Have you ever run tests on your faucet water and your bottled drinking water?

Whichever way you think, you should choose your drinking water carefully. You may even want to run tests – or obtain literature showing the results of tests that have been run on the various drinking waters available to you.

Take bottled drinking water. To many people, the fact that the water is bottled means it is pure. But is it? Might it be possible that your bottled drinking water contains as great a colony of “water criminals” as your tap water does?

Bottled Drinking Water Terminology

The following are definitions frequently used on the labels of bottled drinking water to describe the water’s characteristics, sources, and methods of treatment. They may surprise you. These definitions are taken from the pamphlet, “Bottled Water Basics” published by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

* Artesian water, ground water, spring water, well water - water from an

underground aquifer which may or may not be treated. Well water and artesian water are tapped through a well. Spring water is collected as it flows to the surface or via a borehole. Ground water can be either.

* Distilled water - steam from boiling water is recondensed and bottled. Distilling water kills microbes and removes water's natural minerals, giving it a flat taste.

* Drinking water – water intended for human consumption and sealed in bottles or other containers with no ingredients except that it may optionally contain safe and suitable disinfectants. Fluoride may be added within limitations set in the bottled water quality standards.

* Mineral water – Ground water that naturally contains 250 or more parts per million of total dissolved solids.

Did you notice …?

* Bottled drinking water is not necessarily pure, just as tap water is not pure.

* Bottled drinking water may come from an aquifer that has been treated with chemicals or not treated at all. Tap water will normally be treated.

* Bottled drinking water may contain any number of impurities such as human or animal waste – many that tap water is not permitted to contain.

* Bottled drinking water may contain disinfectants and fluorides - just as tap water does!

* Bottled drinking water may contain minerals, even lead!

Bottled drinking water is often much more impure than you could hope!

Bottled Drinking Water Standards

The USFDA does set standards for bottled drinking water. You will want to read them if you are serious about providing pure drinking water for your family.

Bottled drinking water sold in U.D. interstate commerce, including products bottled overseas, must meet the following minimum federal standards:

* Bottled drinking water must meet FDA standards for physical, chemical, microbial, and radiological contaminants. When EPA sets a new standard for a

contaminant in tap water, FDA must establish a new standard for the same contaminant in bottled drinking water or find that EPA's new standard is not applicable to bottled drinking water.

TRANSLATION: Bottled drinking water need be no better than tap water. In fact, it may be held to less stringent standards.

* Bottlers must include the name of the product and type of water; the name and address of the manufacturer, packer, or distributor; and the net content on their labels.

TRANSLATION: Labels on bottled drinking water do not have to tell you what has been added to the water.

* New bottled drinking water sources must be approved by a state or local jurisdiction. Bottlers must also test their sources and finished bottled drinking water products at least once a week for microbiological contaminants and at least once a year for physical, chemical, and radiological contaminants.

TRANSLATION: Once the source is approved by the government, using EPA and FDA standards, it is up to the bottler to maintain its cleanliness.

* If bottled drinking water is found to be adulterated or hazardous to health, it is subject to FDA enforcement action, such as seizure of domestic products and refusal of entry of imports.

TRANSLATION: Bottled drinking water is not guaranteed pure by anyone. Only if actual hazards are found may enforcement action take place.

* Bottlers must operate their plants in accordance with FDA's good manufacturing practices to ensure that their bottled drinking water products are safe and produced under safe and sanitary conditions.

TRANSLATION: Your bottled drinking water is to be produced under safe and sanitary conditions, but actual contents are not strictly controlled.

Bottled drinking water is good to have on hand in case of an emergency, but don't think of bottled drinking water as pure drinking water. Purity can vary from one brand to another and from one batch to another.