

Title:

Drinking Water Bottle "bugs";

Word Count:

681

Summary:

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Convenience

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Keywords:

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Article Body:

Drinking water bottles are ubiquitous in the U.S. - and in many other developed countries as well. Children carry drinking water bottles to school. Parents carry drinking water bottles as they commute to work, children's soccer games, etc. Some people have begun carrying drinking water bottles to church with them. Athletes always seem to have a drinking water bottle with them.

Convenience

A major reason for using drinking water bottles is the convenience they offer. Water can be taken almost anywhere. Drinking water bottles involve little cost, and their loss is not a problem. When they are empty, they need not be carried home. They can simply be placed in a recycle bin or other waste disposal.

What happens, though, when drinking water bottles are not recycled?

The Danger

Disposing of drinking water bottles is the best idea, but many people refill them. If they empty the bottle while jogging, they stop and refill it at a water

fountain. If they have a filter at home, they refill drinking water bottles from the filter. At work, they may refill a drinking water bottle from the water cooler. Each time, they may be putting healthy drinking water into the bottle, but is this a safe practice? Or is there danger in refilling disposable drinking water bottles?

The danger is not, as claimed by an old internet urban legend, that the bottles will break down into carcinogenic compounds. That plastic scare originated with the master's thesis of an undergraduate student who did not conduct sufficient scientific study before publishing his thesis. USFDA standards control the type of plastic used for bottled water.

Can plastic drinking water bottles break down? Can plastic leach into the water when you refill them? Possibly. It is said that some bottles, even those approved by the USFDA, do indeed leach into water - even before you open the bottle.

Bacteria

Although your plastic drinking water bottles may not break down into cancer-causing compounds, and may not leach plastic into your water, they do contain bacteria. Bacteria can grow and reproduce rapidly in an empty plastic drinking water bottle.

Consider this. Each time you take a drink from that drinking water bottle, you deposit bacteria from your mouth on the rim of the bottle. If you refill the bottle without washing it, you simply flush the bacteria into your water. The problem is compounded if the bottle is empty for a while, and allowed to get warm. Bacteria then have an ideal environment for reproduction.

But They Are MY Bugs

Many (not all) of the bacteria are indeed from your mouth. However, in your system, your body regulates them at reasonable levels. Bacteria in the drinking water bottle are no longer regulated. They can reproduce rapidly. In addition, other germs will enter the bottle from the air, mingling with those from your mouth.

Washing Helps

Washing the bottle thoroughly will destroy most of the bacteria. The bottle must be washed after each use, before refilling. You must wash the neck of the bottle and the entire inside. This means you cannot stop for a refill at the drinking

fountain in the park. You cannot refill it at the water cooler and take it back to your desk. The only way to have healthy drinking water is to use drinking water bottles only once, or wash them thoroughly before refilling.

Since very hot water is the best way to get the bottle clean, a dishwasher is recommended. You will have to place the bottle on the top rack, since the plastic is not designed for high temperature. When the wash cycle ends, remove your drinking water bottle immediately before the dry cycle can begin.

FREEZE OUT

Finally, when you take the clean drinking water bottle from your dishwasher, place it into the freezer immediately. This will keep germs from getting into the bottle. It will also keep mold from forming. When you are ready to use it, take the clean drinking water bottle from the freezer, fill, and cap.

Disposable plastic drinking water bottles are convenient, but don't sacrifice your health.