The 6 Worst Brands of Bottled Water You Can Buy

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The Environmental Working Group (EWG) analyzed the company websites and product labels of over 170 varieties of bottled water to see if the companies disclosed information on where water came from, how the water was treated, and whether the results of tests to ensure purity were revealed.

The researchers also called the bottled water companies to see if they would willingly give information to consumers.

More than half of the bottled water products failed the transparency test. Almost 20 percent didn't say where their water comes from, and an additional 32 percent did not disclose any information on treatment or purity of water.

According to Yahoo Green:

"Only three brands earned the highest possible... ***Gerber Pure Purified Water****,****Nestle Pure Life Purified Water****, and* ***Penta Ultra-Purified Water****... [S]ix brands got the worst marks in EWG's report...* ***Whole Foods Italian Still Mineral Water****,* ***Vintage Natural Spring Water****,* ***Sahara Premium Drinking Water****,* ***O Water Sport Electrolyte Enhanced Purified Drinking Water****,****Market Basket Natural Spring Water****, and* ***Cumby's Spring Water.****"*
Again, the Environmental Working Group (EWG) steps up to the plate and delivers the actual facts about what's going on.

When you pay up to 1,900 times more for something, you expect it to be worth it, but when it comes to bottled water most of the benefits are pure fantasy. What's worse, most bottled water companies hide the truth about their product in order to keep this profitable scheme going.

Majority of Companies Refuse to Divulge What's Really in Their Bottles

The EWG set out to find the answers to three simple, basic questions about bottled water that consumers have a right to know:

- Where does the water come from?
- Is it purified, and if so, how?
- Is the water tested, and what, if any, contaminants have been found?

Interestingly, many bottled water companies will not supply you with the answers to these questions. According to the EWG, nine out of the top 10 best-selling brands fail to provide answers to all three. Only one of the 173 bottled water products surveyed—Nestlé's Pure Life Purified Water—discloses this information right on the label, and provides information for requesting a water quality test report.

In all, only *three* bottled water products received a good rating for transparency from the EWG:

1. Nestlé's Pure Life Purified Water
2. Gerber Pure Purified Water
3. Penta Ultra-Purified Water

For the least transparent of the bunch, please see the EWG report.[1] All in all, 18 percent of bottled waters do not tell you where their water comes from, and 32 percent do not disclose anything about the treatment or the purity of the water. Why is this?

Could it be because the truth doesn't justify the exorbitant price tag? After all, why would anyone knowingly pay a premium for something that is in many cases indistinguishable from regular tap water!

Bottled Water is No Guarantee of Purity

Yes, about 40 percent of bottled water IS regular tap water, which may or may not have received any additional treatment. In fact, most municipal tap water must adhere to *stricter* purity standards than the bottled water industry. The EPA requires large public water suppliers to test for contaminants as often as several times a day, but the FDA requires private bottlers to test for contaminants only once a week, once a year, or once every four years, depending on the contaminant.

Another independent test performed by the Environmental Working Group in 2009 revealed 38 low-level contaminants in bottled water, with *each of the 10 tested brands containing an average of eight chemicals,* including:

- Disinfection byproducts (DBPs)
- Caffeine
- Tylenol
- Nitrate
- Industrial chemicals
- Arsenic

- Bacteria

Another health hazard that can be found in both tap and bottled water isfluoride. Many make the mistake of thinking bottled water is unflouridated, but that's not the case at all. Some bottled waters even make a point of adding fluoride, so the only way to ensure the water you're drinking is fluoride-free is to have access to the water quality test results. However, bottled water has yet another significant drawback.

Aside from the fact that many of them are little more than tap water of questionable purity (since most companies refuse to provide the necessary information to determine water quality), the bottle itself is extremely detrimental to the environment, and can further contaminate the water inside it.

Drinking from Plastic Bottles Poses Health Risks

The plastic often used to make water bottles contains a variety of health-harming chemicals that can easily leach out and contaminate the water, such as:

- Cancer-causing PFOAs
- PBDEs (flame retardant chemicals), which have been linked to reproductive problems and altered thyroid levels
- The reproductive toxins, phthalates
- BPA, which disrupts the endocrine system by mimicking the female hormone estrogen

If you leave your water bottle in a hot car, or reuse it, your exposure is magnified because heat and stress increase the amount of chemicals that leach out of the plastic. So the container your water comes in needs to receive just as much attention as the water itself, and plastic is simply not a wise choice from a health perspective … not to mention the extreme amounts of toxic waste produced!

Ditched Water Bottles Are Destroying the Environment

Bottled water is perhaps one of the most environmentally unfriendly industries there is. Americans consume about *half a billion bottles of water every week!*The environmental ramifications of this practice are enormous. The video below, "The Story of Bottled Water," brought to you by the folks who created the wildly successful video "The Story of Stuff," does an excellent job of illustrating the truth about bottled water.

First of all, the bottle manufacturing process itself releases toxic compounds like nickel, ethylbenzene, ethylene oxide and benzene, and the amount of oil used to make plastic water bottles could fuel a million cars annually.

Then you have the transportation of these bottles, back and forth across the globe. A lot of miles have been covered by the time you pick up that bottle from the store shelf and haul it back to your house. But their travels don't end there. As explained in the video above, many of our non-recycled water bottles are AGAIN shipped overseas to be dumped as waste in less affluent nations…

According to the most recent report by The Association of Postconsumer Plastic Recyclers,[2] only 28 percent of water bottles are currently recycled in the US. What happens to the rest of them?
They end up in:

1. Landfills, where they can remain for thousands of years, leaching toxins into the ground

2. Incinerators, where the chemicals are released into the air

3. Oceans, where they slowly disintegrate into tiny particles, turning portions of our waters into a plastic stew. In this way plastic also enters the food chain, and kills wildlife

Why Pay 1,900 Times More for... Nothing?

In light of the fact that you really don't get anything "more" for your money when you splurge on bottled water, why would you continue buying it?

The bottled water industry vehemently denies the claims that they've "manufactured demand," stating they're simply giving consumers what they want. But honestly, unless people were convinced that tap water was unfit to drink and that bottled water was pure, that consumer demand would surely vanish. The Environmental Working Group ends their report with the recommendation to ***drink filtered tap water***.
I agree.

The caveat though is to make sure you *filter* your tap water. I've written a large number of articles on the hazards of tap water, from fluoride to dangerous chemicals and drugs, to toxic disinfection byproducts and heavy metals, so having a good filtration system in place is more of a necessity than a luxury in most areas. Another option to consider is to bottle your own water from a gravity-fed spring.
There's a great website called FindaSpring.com where you can find natural springs in your area. This is a great way to get back to nature and teach your children about health and the sources of clean water. The best part is that most of these spring water sources are **free**!
Remember to bring either clear polyethylene or glass containers to collect the water so no unsafe chemicals can contaminate your water on the way home. If you choose to use glass bottles, be sure to wrap them in towels to keep them from breaking in the car.

Your Best Water Filtration Options

A whole house water filter is your best bet, as it will remove harsh chlorine byproducts from your whole house. These toxins pose a health hazard not only in your drinking water, but also in your shower and appliances.

The best option for your home's drinking water is to filter at the point of use with an NSF certified water filter. This addresses all of the chemicals found in well water or an urban water supply, along with any lead that might leach into the water if you have old plumbing.

Ideally, you'll want to consider both a whole house filter and a point of use filter on your kitchen tap. This covers all the bases for protecting your appliances from harsh chlorine and chlorine byproducts, protecting your lungs from airborne water contaminants that come from the shower, and protecting your tap water from all contaminants that both arrive at your house and are added by your own plumbing.

Unfortunately, adding both of these filters may be cost prohibitive for some families. In that case, you may actually want to consider limiting the duration of your shower, as a seven-minute hot shower will expose your body (through your

lungs and skin absorption) to more toxins than drinking a gallon of unfiltered tap water!

That said, ensuring a safe, pure, supply of drinking water for your family should be at the very top of your list.