How to Choose the Right Water Filter

There are more reasons than ever to filter tap water for drinking and cooking. Tap water is commonly contaminated with heavy metals, chemicals, and radioactive elements. Toxic water has been found in many cities across the U.S., from the Flint crisis to many communities who may not even know hazards in their water. The utility companies are doing a lot of shady business to hide this information from the consumers for the sake of saving their pockets. Luckily, it is possible to take the situation into your own hands by filtering your water at home. With so many water filters out there, the only next step is choosing the right one. Expert information such as from the Environmental Working Group (EWG) can help you make the right decision for you.

Contaminants that Hide In Tap Water

When it comes to hazards in tap water, there are different contaminants to be aware of.

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Fluoride: Fluoride is a toxic substance that has been added to public water supplies since 1945, and became a nationwide phenomenon in the 1960s when society was tricked to believe that it helps prevent cavities in teeth. While there is a very small benefit to applying fluoride straight on the teeth, it is a very health-damaging substance. Worst of all, drinking it has no benefits to teeth. (When comparing decay rates for fluoridated and non-fluoridated countries, the results are similar).

The harm, however, is significant. Fluoride is toxic in any amounts, and it is impossible to predict the dose of it a

person is receiving on a daily basis when drinking unfiltered tap water. Fluoride causes arthritis-like symptoms. It is toxic to the brain, and it may increase the risk of cancer, especially bone tumors, and lung, and bladder cancers.

Another chemical that is added to tap water on purpose is **chlorine**. Because it is used as a cleaner, it is added to water to "purify" it. However, it is not fully safe. It can react with water and produce toxic hydrochloric acid which causes cell damage, memory problems, and can even impair balance.

Heavy Metals: Since the Flint Crisis, this type of contaminant has been the most commonly discussed. Lead and other heavy metals can leach into the water from old pipes.

Lead, the element that poisoned Flint children, is one of the worst. It is a neurotoxin and also toxic to nearly every single organ in the human body. Lead poisoning, as well as chronic low-levels of lead exposure, can lead to developmental and behavioral issues in children, as well as brain damage at high doses. It has also been linked to cancers, kidney and heart problems, and reproductive issues.

Mercury is another extremely toxic heavy metal that is not safe at any dose. It can also cause brain damage, as well a nerve damage and cognitive disability. The many symptoms it causes include headaches, fatigue, memory problems, rashes, and mood swings.

Radioactive elements: It was recently found that 170 million U.S. people access tap water that is contaminated by carcinogenic radioactive elements. These elements come from inside the Earth when mining for gas and oil. Because they create ionizing radiation, this leads to cancers, birth defects, and even dysfunctional brain development. Elements such as radium 226, radium-228, radon, uranium, tritium, and strontium-90 increase chances of cancer even at legal limits.

However, all of them are found at higher than allowed levels across the U.S. The highest number of people affected are in California, Texas, and Florida, but other states are not far behind.

Other chemicals: Many other chemicals end up in our drinking water supplies from the manufacturing industry; big corporations poisoning the environment. In one case, not that far from Flint, Michigan, an auto part manufacturing left a giant toxic plume over 50 years ago. Today, the pollution in the groundwater is still growing and affecting more households by contaminating water with a known carcinogen called **trichloroethylene** (TCE).

Recommended: *The Best Water For Detoxifying and Drinking*

Other factories left behind **polychlorinated biphenyls** (PCBs); chemicals that were used in paints and electronics until their ban in 1979. Still today, they are found in tap water as far as thousands of miles away from their main source – where they lay in landfills. PCBs are also linked to cancer risk, as well as are hazardous for the immune and nervous systems.

Although **arsenic** can exist from natural sources, is often used artificially by the industrial companies. Long-term arsenic poisoning is linked to cancers of skin, lungs, and bladder; and severe abdominal issues.

Other chemicals that end up in water from different toxic industries are dioxins (released when burning waste), DDT (banned insecticide), HCB (banned pesticide), dacthal (herbicide still used today), and MtBE (a gasoline additive).

What About Bottled Water?

A lot of bottled water companies take the same tap water that you have access to, filter it, and re-sell it for way more of a price (hundreds of times more expensive). They often do a bad job filtering the water. If it’s not just filtered tap

water, it’s coming from companies like Nestle damaging local environment and putting local populations at risk.

Related: ***Drinking Bottled Water Means Drinking Microplastics, According To Damning New Study***

The second, much bigger issue, with bottled water, is that other chemicals may leach from the plastic into the water. This is especially true when the bottle is left in the sun during hot weather. The chemical often found in plastics is BPA – which acts like a hormone and disrupts many functions in the body. However, even buying BPA-free is not enough. Manufacturers substitute BPA with other chemicals…that also act like hormones! A study in *Environmental Health Perspectives* found that over 95% of products in BPA-free plastics tested positive for these chemicals when exposed to natural sunlight.

In the end, the safest thing to do is to purchase a glass bottle and fill it with water you filtered yourself at home.

A Detailed Guide to Water Filters

To bring some clarity to choosing the right water filter for you, EWG released a buying guide. To help you choose, here are the different types of filters available, which technology they use and how it works.

First, it is important to note that the most common brand available at supermarket chains, Brita, does not filter out fluoride. The best of the filters are not usually sold at major stores and are found online.

Recommended: ***Diatomaceous Earth – Mother Nature’s Secret Weapon: What Is It, How to Use It, Where to Find It***

These filtering systems can come in forms of water pitchers, countertop faucets, under-the-sink systems, and whole-house filtration. Whenever possible, a whole house system is the best choice for health, so that there are no chemicals

absorbed through the skin when showering or washing hands at different sinks in the house.

From there, you should choose which filtering technology you prefer (some use multiple) instead of focusing on the brand name itself. Each technology can also vary in quality and how well it removes every contaminant.

Carbon or activated carbon filters: Carbon removes contaminants from the water by bonding with them on a chemical level. . Some remove only chlorine, but unable to clear out the other toxins, leaving heavy metals and chemicals behind.

These filters can use a carbon block, a fibredyne block, or granulated activated carbon. The first two are more effective in general, but the second type is best at removing sediments.

On the plus side, carbon filters serve for a long time without needing replacement.

Related: ***Activated Charcoal is Very Popular Right Now – Here's Why***

Ceramic and mechanical water filters: Ceramic filters and mechanical filters block sediments by using tiny holes but they let all the contaminants pass. They do not remove chemicals.

Deionizing filters: These filters work through an ion-exchange process; it removes mineral salts and electrically-charged molecules from the water, but leave behind non-ionic contaminants including toxic VOCs.

Ion exchange water filter: This process replaces ions using a resin. For example, water softening removes calcium and magnesium and adds sodium.

Ozone and Ultraviolet filters: Both ozone and ultraviolet light kill bacteria and microorganisms, but do not remove chemicals.

Reverse osmosis filters: Reverse osmosis blocks any particles that are larger than the molecule of water, therefore blocking: fluoride, arsenic, and nitrates. However, it cannot block chlorine or VOCs. The other setback of this filter is that it uses a lot of water – not the best pick for the environment. This method also ends up being pricey.

Solar-powered water filters: These filters use natural solar energy to purify the water and are a good investment for camping and other outdoor activities.

Distilled water filter: Distillation heats water until vaporization happens, then condenses it back into liquid form. Distillation removes minerals, bacteria, and viruses, but not chlorine or chemicals.

Related: ***Symptoms of Dehydration & Benefits of Proper Hydration – Are you getting enough water?***

The main advantage of distilled water is that it removes the most amounts of toxins, heavy metals, pesticides, herbicides, and radioactive elements.

One concern some people have is that distilled water is acidic. However, if you do not let the water stay in the jug too long before drinking it, the acidity level will be lower. Also, if you take care of your digestive tract, it will also not affect anything – the body will be able to take care of it.

The Newest Player on the Market: Structured Water Filters

This type of filtration system is new, or not yet fully known, but it may become the best choice in the future.

Dr. Gerald Pollack discovered the fourth phase of water – also called structured water, living water, or exclusive zone (EZ) water. This type of water brings the water to its original

state as if it came straight from a spring; it hydrates the body better and is healthier in every way.

Editor's Comment:

I like the Berkey the best. We hope to have these on Green Lifestyle Market soon, but at this time we do not sell any water filters at all.

At my house, we have a Berkey with the fluoride-filter attachments, and we also have an AquaTru Water Filter. I like this one, and I think it does an excellent job, but Berkey water tastes better. You can taste the plastic with everything else when you do a side by side comparison. I've used Zero, Britta, and Pure pitcher filters as well. Zero was the best pitcher filter. Using this meter to check PPMs, both filters bring tap water down to zero.

Must Read:

- *What's the Best Water for Detoxifying and For Drinking?*
- *Detox Cheap and Easy Without Fasting – Recipes Included*
- *Inexpensive, Easy Detox – The One Gallon Challenge*

Sources:

- *12 Toxins in Your Drinking Water* – The Global Healing Center
- *170 Million In U.S. Drink Radioactive Tap Water. Trump Nominee Faked Data To Hide Cancer Risk* – Environmental Working Group
- *Study: Most Plastics Leach Hormone-Like Chemicals* – NPR
- *EWG's Updated Water Filter Buying Guide – Environmental Working Group*