

WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE... AND NOT A DROP TO DRINK!



That's how almost half of Americans feel about tap water. The 2014 Flint River scandal tainted *all* our perceptions about the safety of the government-sanctioned water coming to our kitchen sinks. That was a sad story of racial injustice and bad decision-making when the city officials switched Flint's water supply from Detroit (city water) to the contaminated Flint River to save money. And, knowing there was inadequate testing, officials still ignored complaints, and it resulted in lead poisoning and significant health deterioration.

When the debacle blew up, semitrailers of free bottled water were delivered to Flint's street corners, and the whole world breathed a sigh of relief. Today, Flint, has as good (or better) water quality as anyone else in Michigan, but its residents still don't trust it. Most of them still drink bottled water. (And maybe you do, too, as a result.) Many people perceive bottled water as the cleanest form of potable water without knowing anything about its origins. Keep in mind, when you buy bottled water, the source of the water is most likely unclear. Those who prefer bottled water often claim they can even taste the difference. (Truth is, in repeated blind taste tests, we fail to discern the difference.)

Here's another perspective on drinking water. The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is responsible for the safety of 150,000 public water systems across the US that serve more than 300 million people. Conversely, the FDA is responsible for overseeing the countless brands of bottled water.

The EPA, through its Safe Drinking Water Act, has historically been even *more* stringent about tap water bacterial counts than was the FDA about bottled water. If you're concerned, I encourage you to get a free evaluation of the sample from your kitchen sink, the primary source of drinking and cooking water.

Or, consider a home filtration system, such as reverse osmosis which removes chlorine or chloramine, the tap water disinfectants that have done their job and are no longer necessary. Though, as a dentist, I'm compelled to mention that reverse osmosis filters out fluoride too.

So, your kids will need a prescription supplement to strengthen their developing enamel as it's forming. (Incidentally, most bottled waters also lack fluoride.)

There are other health threats to consider regarding bottled water. Adding acid is the easiest way to keep bacterial counts down and extend the shelf life. Many waters have a pH of 4--that's 1000 times more acidic than tap water! Habitually drinking acid leads to enamel erosion, tooth decay, osteoporosis, and kidney stones for starters.

You'll also want to consider the nasty, plastic polymer bottles that store the water and allow chemicals to leach out, contaminating the water and thus your body. We worry *most* about the endocrine disruptors such as bisphenol A (BPA), which has been linked to breast cancer, endocrine dysfunctions in fetuses and children, obesity, and organ damage.

And let's not gloss over the horrific environmental impact of single-use plastic. We heap about four *billion* plastic water bottles a year into the US waste stream. That's *if* the bottle makes it into the landfill; many end up in the wilderness and waterways, wreaking devastation on our wildlife. Know that it takes an average of 450 years to degrade a single bottle.

Finally, the idiotic cost. Where tap water costs about \$3 per 1000 liters, bottled water costs \$3 for a *single* liter! That covers the cost to advertise, produce, distribute, store, discard, and *profit* from each of these components. In addition, we spend about \$70 million a year in cleanup and maintenance of our landfills. This all seems like crazy business to me when we're already paying for safe tap water through our taxes!

Three words when it comes to single-use plastic water. Just say "no".



Dr. Susan Maples is a dentist in Holt. She is also a speaker, health educator, and author of "BlabberMouth! 77 Secrets Only Your Mouth Can Tell You to Live a Healthier, Happier, Sexier Life" and "Brave Parent: Raising Healthy, Happy Kids (Against All Odds) in Today's World." Reach her at Susan@DrSusanMaples.com



Total Health Dentistry

Susan Maples, DDS | Tracey Epley, DMD

Total-Health-Dentistry.com

517-694-0353