



# Hydration and the Disposable Bottle

By Wendy Marks  
July 29, 2015

Summer is way too short in New England. In fact, As far as I'm concerned, summer is way too short everywhere. I'm one of those people that live for the hot muggy days when I can swim and stay in the water for hours at a time. I know some people are land animals and find their pleasures in other ways, but no matter what your summer pleasure happens to be, you will need water to enjoy it. Here are some tips about how to stay safe and well-watered.

We all drink more water in the summer, and that is a good thing. We are sweating more, obviously, because the temperature is hotter. With the advent of bottled water it seems that no one is walking around without a source of water at all times. You might think that this would make us a well-hydrated nation, but I'm not sure it has. In my childhood there were water fountains that provided cool, clean water at almost every venue where we had activities. In fact, they were in every public park. We could water ourselves when we were thirsty.

In areas where there are not adequate sources of clean water it is totally appropriate to use bottled water. Several countries and even many cities in the United States do not always have clean water available, and put out water advisories asking residents to boil any tap water before using it for drinking or cooking. Most of us live in highly-regulated water resource areas monitored by state and local authorities. In Massachusetts it is required that the water we drink be monitored several times a year and reports sent to our homes giving us the levels of toxins in the water. In fact, many communities check the water every two weeks. This is the cleanest water you are likely to encounter.

In an excellent documentary called "Tapped", available on Netflix and other sources, you can see what the bottled water industry is doing. There is little FDA regulation of bottled water, which is considered a food, and there is no requirement that companies disclose either the source or treatment methods. Companies can take any water from anywhere and call it anything as long as the calories and sodium content are labeled on the back. The water they sell can be just as contaminated as the water in your local pond.

I am really tempted to go into a full-blown diatribe about pollution, but I will control myself. Let me just say that aside from the awful things we are doing to our wildlife with plastics and the horrors in the ocean, the plastic the bottles are made from can be harmful to your health. These plastics, especially if left in a heated area like a trunk of your car or the parking lot of your supermarket, release chemicals into the water that you drink out of the bottle. In other words the bottles themselves pollute the water that has no standards of purity.

Don't despair however, because there is an easy solution that will save you hundreds of dollars. Even if you live in the tiniest of apartments you can install a counter filter or under-counter filter on your sink. These filters run anywhere from about \$100 to as much as \$1000. I chose one for my home that cost around \$200. You should look for one that improves the taste of your town drinking water if that is an issue. These filters can remove chlorine, rust, and (if you are a little germ phobic like me) take out things like Giardia.

Instead of lugging home cases of water that you bought at the store, you can take your water with you anywhere you go. All you need to do is purchase a drinking water bottle that you can carry with you. A metal one may be a little heavier than your usual bottle of plastic. You can also find safe plastic bottles that do not biodegrade in heat or sunlight. I find it convenient to carry a silicone collapsible cup in my pocketbook for use in situations where I do not want to carry a water bottle. Another advantage of your own bottle is that you can make yourself a little electrolyte cocktail and bring it with you to make sure your hydration is as effective as it can be. I am seeing more and more refillable water bottle dispensers, even in the "Y" that I frequent for my exercise. I think this is a good sign.

Enjoy the summer, stay hydrated, and take care of yourself and the planet.

Namaste,

Wendy