Free speech is fleeting, this content will disappear in: 0 Hours : 22 Minutes : 54 Seconds Learn More

Is Your Tap Water Making You Sick?

Analysis by Dr. Joseph Mercola Fact Checked

February 23, 2022

Download PDF

Previous Next

STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- Data show that just two disinfection byproducts offered compelling evidence that a cumulative risk assessment would reveal health damage from contaminants found in drinking water
- The Environmental Working Group's Tap Water Database is the most complete source of information compiled from data in nearly 50,000 systems users can search by zip code; the guide relies on current science and not legal limits set by regulatory agencies
- The textile industry is a significant contributor to water pollution, dumping nearly 20% of dyes and fixative agents used to set colors down the drain, often at high temperatures and high pH
- Arsenic and lead are two heavy metals found in drinking water that have no acceptable level of exposure and increase your risk of disease, yet the EPA balances the cost of filtering water against health challenges when determining a maximum contaminant level
- Agencies also regulate the addition of fluoride to drinking water, another pollutant that is associated with a lower IQ in children, but for which the CDC has no documentation of safety or prenatal or early life benefit

Drinking water may be treated with a variety of chemicals, which create intermediaries and disinfection byproducts. One study[1] did a side-by-side comparison of epidemiological studies and cancer risk assessment after exposure to two disinfection byproducts — haloacetic acids and trihalomethanes.

Yet, disinfection byproducts are not the only toxic chemicals found in tap water. One glass of water may contain a cocktail of forever chemicals known as PFAS,[2] lead, arsenic[3] and a list of other chemicals found in your local area that you were never meant to consume.[4] You can check your local supply by using the Environmental Working Group's (EWGs) Tap Water Database.[5]

One of the issues with the water supply is that we have an aging infrastructure that may be nearing the end of its useful life.[6] Another is the water pollution that results from firefighting chemicals,[7] agrichemicals,[8] drugs, nerve toxins that are produced by freshwater cyanobacteria[9] and toxins that are intentionally added to the water supply.[10]

Since more than 50% of your body is water,[11] you require a constant supply of pure water to fuel your filtration system and ensure your body is free of toxins. Your blood, kidneys and liver require a good source of clean water to detoxify from the other toxic exposures you meet every day. Yet, it is the water supply that is also in desperate need of detoxification.

Disinfectant Byproducts in Tap Water Raise Risk of Cancer

The EWG opened the Tap Water Database in 2017.[12] It was the most complete source of information about U.S. drinking water that compiled data from nearly 50,000 systems across the country. The data mining project was aimed at increasing information and awareness about tap water pollution.

Users can enter their zip code[13] and find a list of contaminants that had been detected and reported to the authorities. The guide relies on current science to report levels of pollutants instead of legal limits set by regulatory agencies. Ken Cook, president of EWG, said in a press release:[14]

> *"Just because your tap water gets a passing grade from the government doesn't always mean it's safe. It's time to stop basing environmental regulations on political or economic compromises, and instead listen to what scientists say about the long-term effects of toxic chemicals and empower Americans to protect themselves from pollutants even as they demand the protective action they deserve from government."*

In November 2021, the EWG called[15] for a new framework to analyze drinking water that would account for multiple contaminants present simultaneously and the cumulative effect that has over a lifetime. It was the same month the organization updated their tap water database, which:[16]

> *"... highlighted the groundbreaking peer-reviewed research published since the last update, using the data to help communicate to the public about the potential health risks of contaminants in their drinking water, as well as underscoring key gaps in water contamination research."*

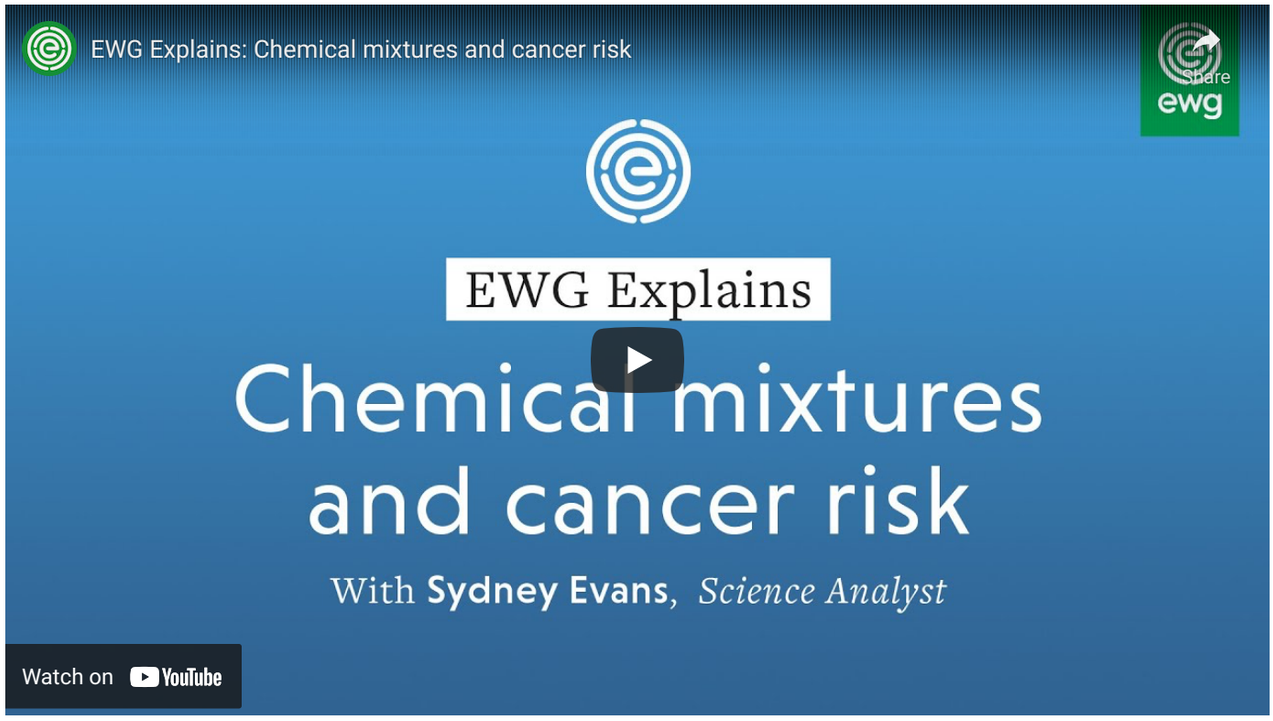
The EWG notes that the federal drinking water standards evaluate and regulate one chemical at a time.[17] The process is slow and cannot keep up with the rate at which pollution is added to the water supply, often at levels many scientists believe are unsafe for the public. This was highlighted in a study[18] published in 2020 by the EWG in which the scientists compared two disinfection byproducts in the tap water.

The researchers concluded that the results offered a compelling argument for a cumulative risk assessment, as opposed to the current state of evaluating chemicals one at a time. They note that the two disinfection byproducts evaluated in the study are a small portion of those that form when drinking water is disinfected.

Additionally, "The inclusion of unregulated haloacetic acids in a toxicologically-based framework increases the likelihood that a cancer risk assessment for disinfection byproducts accurately reflects risk."[19] The researchers also highlighted that the analysis demonstrated the value of using human data to capture real-world risks which "cannot be fully assessed by toxicological studies."

This was not the first study to demonstrate the levels of toxic chemicals in drinking water, and likely will not be the last. A team from Consumer Reports and The Guardian[20] took samples of drinking water from a cross-section of each of the EPA's 10 jurisdictional regions and found that 118 of the 120 samples had high levels of PFAS or arsenic, as well as detectable levels of lead.

In the short 2-minute video below, EWG scientist Sydney Evans explains the concerns many scientists have of drinking a "toxic cocktail" of contaminants in drinking water. The cumulative effect of drinking chemical pollutants over a lifetime could result in over 100,000 cancer cases in the U.S.



Your Clothing Is a Significant Contributor to Water Pollution

As Evans points out in this video, the most effective way to control pollutants in the water supply is to prevent it. She notes that reducing farm runoff and discharge from manufacturing can help protect the water supply. She calls for investment in tap water infrastructure, especially in small communities, and fixing the tap water standards.

Researchers have also found that nearly 20% of the pollutants found in drinking water are from your clothing.[21] You may not think about the clothing industry being one of the biggest polluters on the planet, but it's nearing the top of the list. The textile industry contributes to water pollution through dying and treatment of the material with dangerous chemicals.

Rita Kant of the University Institute of Fashion Technology at Panjab University in India says color is a major reason people choose to buy certain articles of clothing.[22] Although there are ways to dye clothing that don't harm the environment, most textile dyes are toxic for nearly all forms of life. Problems exist with the dye itself, 20% of which goes down the drain, and with the fixative agents used to set the colors in the fabric.

In addition to the chemicals being toxic, they are often discharged from textile mills at high temperatures and pH, which is also damaging to the environment.[23] Some of the dyes also use heavy metals which are known to cause cancer[24] and can accumulate in crops and fish from contaminated water and soil.[25]

Unfortunately, many of the textile dyeing facilities are in developing countries where regulations are lax and labor costs are low. Untreated or minimally treated wastewater is discharged into nearby rivers to lower the cost of production[26] and from there it travels across the globe. An estimated 40% of textile chemicals are discharged by China.[27]

In addition to polluting the water, the industry uses massive quantities of it. A textile mill that produces about 8,000 kilograms (17,637 pounds) of fabric in one day uses approximately 1.6 million liters (422,675 gallons) of water.[28] The fast fashion industry is a large contributor to chemical pollution and the destruction of our drinking water supply.

The average person purchased more than 65 articles of clothing in 2016, according to the toxic textiles report by Green America.[29] Added to which, many throw away 70 pounds of clothing and other textiles each year.

Even when clothing is recycled, Green America notes that “less than 1% of the resources required to make clothing is recaptured and reused to create new clothing.”[30] When you donate clothes, it’s also not a sustainable solution, as the majority end up getting sold to textile “recyclers” and exported to other countries.

EPA Waffles on Lead and Arsenic in Your Drinking Water

The greatest threat arsenic poses is when it's found in drinking water, food preparation and irrigating food crops. Long-term exposure can lead to several forms of cancer,[31] and other research suggests there's an association with neurological effects, diabetes and high blood pressure.[32]

The health impact of low exposure happens over a long period and has been shown to reduce children's IQ[33] and increase the risk of skin discoloration and lesions.[34] The acceptable level for arsenic in drinking water was originally set in 1942 at 50 parts per billion (ppb).[35]

This was reduced to 10 parts per billion in 2001, which was an amount the EPA felt would help water system operators balance the cost of filtering water against health challenges resulting from exposure.[36] Yet this is still more than triple the 3-ppb level at which experts have long insisted it should be limited and which the EPA first considered. A 2017 NRDC study[37] noted that the EPA had set a maximum contaminant level for arsenic at zero since no level is safe.

However, it set the enforceable level at 10 ppb, which continues to present a “substantial cancer risk.” Lead is another heavy metal contaminant that the EPA recognizes has no safe exposure limit, yet they do not require utility services to lower lead levels until 10% of the homes sampled in the area exceed 15 ppb.[38]

In the same NRDC report,[39] the researchers found 5,367 water systems were allowing high levels of lead and copper into the water system affecting over 18 million consumers.

There is an overwhelming cost to the community and individuals from exposure to lead, including kidney and brain damage, anemia, weakness, neurological damage to a developing baby, lower IQ in children, and infertility in men and women.[40] Yet, the EPA has not made any significant changes to the maximum acceptable exposure levels.

Toxin Intentionally Added to Tap Water Lowers IQ

In addition to pollutants that make it into the water supply from contamination to groundwater, regulatory agencies add fluoride to the drinking water supply. According to a commentary in the journal Nature,[41] it is nearly impossible to get both sides of the fluoride issue to meet in the middle.

Supporters say it prevents cavities and strengthens teeth, but opponents say the risks present to children's overall health far outweigh any dental benefits.[42] To date fluoride is hailed by the CDC as "one of the 10 greatest public health achievements of the 20th century,"[43] with roughly 73% of the U.S. population drinking from a fluoridated public water supply in 2018.[44]

A landmark study[45] published in 2021 confirmed that very low levels of fluoride exposure during pregnancy impacted brain development in a child and at a level that may be causing more damage than lead, mercury or arsenic.

What you hear most often from proponents of fluoride at council meetings and from policymakers, is that government agencies can vouch for fluoridation “safety and effectiveness,” and regulate the practice responsibly. The thinking therefore, is because they say that, it must be true.

However, instead of verifying the claims, policymakers have put their unquestioning trust in government agencies and media outlets have suspended their professionalism by not only blindly trusting the agencies, but also discrediting those who oppose fluoridation.[46] However, under oath, representatives have proved that this mantra of “safe and effective” is only a baseless claim used to promote a failed policy.

Casey Hannan, director of the CDC's oral health division,[47] testified that the CDC has no data establishing the safety of fluoride's effect on the brain,[48] despite decades of touting the safety for all citizens, including children. Hannan also admits there is no prenatal or early life benefit.[49]

We can't count on the mainstream media or the public health authorities to tell the public or decision-makers about what is happening. It's up to individuals to pass this information to family and friends and encourage them to pass it along as well.

Please help us get to the finish line in a world without fluoridation. If you're concerned about the health effects of fluoride, please support the Fluoride Action Network[50] with your tax-deductible donation today.

By popular demand, I am pleased to share with you an exciting update — my entire Censored Library has finally returned! Through Substack, an information sharing platform, I am once again able to share with you all the valuable research I have gathered through the years. Click below to access my Censored Library now.

Access Now

As a reminder, my daily newsletter is still free and content will be released on Mercola.com before anywhere else. After 48 hours, the articles will be transferred to my Censored Library on Substack.

+ Sources and References

Previous Article

How to End Vaccine Mandates — A History Lesson

Next Article

Give Up Soda

Hide Comments (17)

Post your comment

Sort Comments by : Top Rated | Newest | Oldest | Top Poster

Guillermou

Joined On 4/7/2015 8:47:48 AM

Add as Friend | Send Message

The "vaccines", the abuse of antibiotics, water, environmental pollution, food contamination, gene therapies, etc., BigPharma, CDC, FDA, and in general, the globalist elites, with psychopathic minds and ambitions without splits they are degenerating the human race. Instead of purifying the blood with clean spring water as our ancestors drank, they are drinking authentic poison, due to industrial pollution, industrial agriculture and the pharmaceutical industry. The excessive consumption of clothing, as reported by Dr. Mercola, is a great source of contamination. Industrial agriculture Phosphate compounds found in wastewater or discharged directly to surface water come from fertilizers washed from the soil by water or wind, human and animal excretions, and detergents and cleaning products.

Increased algae growth, which in the worst case can lead to eutrophication of surface waters, is a consequence of high phosphate concentrations. When these algae die, decomposition processes result in toxins and surrounding oxygen demand that harm the aquatic ecosystem. A report by Dr. Mercola "Water Treatment Contaminants: Toxic Garbage in Drinking Water" was prompted by concerns about water contamination in the wake of Superstorm Sandy, which dumped tens of millions of gallons of sewage into roads.

rivers along the east coast. www.lewrockwell.com/2013/08/joseph-mercola/is-your-tap-water-killing-y.. In the recent interview on "RFK, Jr. The Defender" podcast, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. and Gary Wockner, Ph.D. discuss how everyone in Southern California may be drinking the drugs that are being dumped down the drain in Las Vegas. The Las Vegas wastewater treatment system empties into Lake Mead, which then flows down the Colorado River and is piped and pumped out of the river to serve as a source of drinking water for all of Southern California.

Reply | Mark as Spam | Posted On 2/23/2022 2:41:16 AM

Like Dislike

Guillermou

Joined On 4/7/2015 8:47:48 AM

Add as Friend | Send Message

On February 14, 2022, a scientific article was published that studied the level of drugs, chemicals and pharmaceuticals in rivers around the planet. the study found that pharmaceutical contamination is polluting water on every continent. The details of the contamination by pharmaceutical products and the study in the links:
childrenshealthdefense.org/defender/chd-tv-rfk-podcast-gary-wockner-dr.. (02 /22/2022)
www.sciencedaily.com/.../220214154838.htm (02/14/2022)

Mark as Spam | Posted On 2/23/2022 2:41:41 AM

Like Dislike

Keythong

Joined On 3/2/2021 12:07:23 PM

Add as Friend | Send Message

This can be summarised as medical negligence/bad (including dentistry), vegetable agriculture, consumerism, with greed and bad politics, are poisoning us, and not just via water pollution! Obsession with fashion would appear to be a symptom of an unsatisfied life, caused by a decadent shallow culture, with toxic consumerism and narcissism, especially with females. Frankly, it should be illegal to provide most/all Fluorine containing products for animal/human consumption (including drugs), dental, or internal use, because most/all are toxic! Fluorine is toxic to the whole body, it was proven to makes teeth _more_ brittle, and the chemical industry knows and labels Fluorine containing compounds as toxic, so the dental industry has no excuse and is negligent for pushing it; similar can be said for dental use of Mercury in Amalgam fillings, which may also pollute sewage.

Dental hygiene can be far easier, with only rare need for dentists, if we consume little or no un-encapsulated chelating acidic stuff like, starches (via saliva enzyme and bacteria), sugars (via bacteria), fermented food, pickles, unbuffered Ascorbic acid, unbuffered chelating amino acid supplements, or any other chelating acids, like Vinegar, Citric or Phosphoric acid.

The real cure for Dental disease is a Carnivore diet, but vegetable farming and associated interests, including the 'elite', hate that, because they'd lose most of their wealth and power; this would also significantly reduce water pollution from multiple causes.

Mark as Spam | Posted On 2/23/2022 7:46:36 AM

Like Dislike

Ofe1238

Joined On 11/16/2021 8:08:42 AM

Add as Friend | Send Message

Dr Mercola this article on water toxicity does not follow your usual pattern of eliciting solutions. What are your suggestions as to the best filtration unit to use for the whole house or at a minimum for the kitchen sink / dishwasher and refrigerator. Ofelia Ugalde: ofeliaug@aol.com 395 606 1543

Reply | Mark as Spam | Posted On 2/23/2022 5:42:42 AM

Like Dislike

Almond

Joined On 2/26/2008 4:23:33 PM

Add as Friend | Send Message

I have been thinking about this. How many people try to detox and drink more water? They end up adding more toxins to their bodies. Water quality is as important as wholesome organic food because your intake of liquid in various forms is likely greater than food by volume. Also, the skin is a semi-permeable membrane so you can also ingest toxins when bathing. I recently drank city water. The water is supposed to be some of the best in the country. Yet, it tasted terrible. We carry our own well water whenever practical. Unless you have a source of excellent mineral water, you do not know what you are missing. Big successes are ften made up of many small details. When diagnosed with cancer, many things contributed to my recovery. However, I believe one factor was having access to glacial run-off water. We would fill glass jugs and carry it home. Fortunately, we never broke a 5-gallon glass carboy and I still use them for wine making.

Reply | Mark as Spam | Posted On 2/23/2022 12:34:28 AM

Like Dislike

Ceyarreckz

Joined On 7/15/2011 11:26:20 PM

Add as Friend | Send Message

a simple question to easily counter the lie of fluoridation: "what part of Crystallized Calcium Phosphate (teeth) do you read Sodium Fluoride(uranium-enrichment industry waste product)?" [to explain the chemical interaction: is like saying plastic lego blocks are useful when making your wooden Lincoln Log cabin; they do NOT fit together, and will only weaken(by design) the structure]

Reply | Mark as Spam | Posted On 2/23/2022 6:14:05 AM

Like Dislike

---

lilitu_adamah

Joined On 2/1/2021 3:06:08 AM

Add as Friend | Send Message

You can keep your drinking water in a ceramic or glass bowl in which you put: some pieces of silver, copper and zinc (all three of the highest purity 99.99% at least); a few shungite beads (C60), coral and magnetic hematite. They will keep the water fresh and with a pleasant taste

Reply | Mark as Spam | Posted On 2/23/2022 6:05:28 AM

Like Dislike

---

ruskar

Joined On 12/7/2007 9:42:39 AM

Add as Friend | Send Message

Right in front of me, is a notice from our water company that stated that they found elevated fluoride levels in our drinking water. It exceeded the secondary maximum contaminant level. I was beyond furious when I read this. I bought a distiller and awaiting it's arrival. It's hard to find distilled water on the shelves anymore. I don't understand why spring and purified water can be found on the shelves but not distilled. Makes me wonder what they are up to.

Reply | Mark as Spam | Posted On 2/23/2022 4:49:04 AM

Like Dislike

---

grulla

Joined On 1/17/2012 8:03:55 AM

Add as Friend | Send Message

"I don't understand why spring and purified water can be found on the shelves but not distilled. Makes me wonder what they are up to." Dr. Mercola has written in the past that prolonged consumption of distilled water (DW) can chelate important minerals from one's body and become acidic, leading to early death. www.mercola.com/.../distilled_water.htm FWIW, I have often thought that drinking DW with a nutritionally, whole food, organic meal might be OK, but drinking much DW in between meals would be problematic??? There are mineralizing agents available that one could add to DW, such as Concentrace, so do the research. www.traceminerals.com/.../concentrace-trace-mineral-drop

Mark as Spam | Posted On 2/23/2022 7:24:46 AM

Like Dislike

Dena1219

Joined On 6/20/2006 7:24:27 AM

Add as Friend | Send Message

The USA has been putting fluoride in the public water supply since 1950. The effect on health and IQ has to have been horrendous. We do not have benevolent or smart people in government, more like the dregs of society.

Reply | Mark as Spam | Posted On 2/23/2022 3:15:22 AM

Like Dislike

---

tallulah3

Joined On 4/21/2021 9:26:59 AM

Add as Friend | Send Message

They're coming at us from every direction

Reply | Mark as Spam | Posted On 2/23/2022 8:12:25 AM

Like Dislike

Jackaroni

Joined On 4/4/2009 8:32:35 AM

Add as Friend | Send Message

Interesting that disinfectants are a significant source of pollution in our water supply, I wonder if the hysteria over Covid has increased this problem? My concern with over use of disinfectants had been primarily with toxicity from direct contact as well as reducing the good bacteria that we rely on for good health. Now I find out that it is in our water supply. I find that soap and water, vinegar, and hydrogen peroxide meet most of my sanitizing needs. I NEVER buy hand sanitizer, and always refused to purchase it for school as it was on the list of requested items for the kids to bring to school each year.

Reply | Mark as Spam | Posted On 2/23/2022 9:25:50 AM

Like Dislike

forbiddenhealing

Joined On 2/21/2011 9:51:43 AM

Add as Friend | Send Message

Modern industrial contamination is "pandemic" so healthy survival requires a detoxification lifestyle along with savvy avoidance of bad water, air, foods, chemical products and building materials. Wrong molecules like toxic organics and heavy metals source chronic oxidative stress and disease. Megadose Vitamin C mobilizes positively charged metals to be chelated by chlorella, clays, charcoal as it generates H2O2 to disassemble unwanted organic molecules as a universal antidote. Silica compounds found in supplements, horsetail and FIJI Water are more specific to remove aluminum...Boron/borax/iodine help remove toxic fluorides...Glycine to reduce glyphosate ...

NAC/RALA/MSM sulfur containing compounds scrub copper and other toxins/excesses...all antioxidants oppose resultant inflammation. Sauna helps sweat-out poisons as exercise and lymphatic massage physically moves them. Organic green vegetables absorb toxins and pure water flushes them out of your internal ocean where electrolyte minerals maintain alkaline oxygen friendly fluids. A hair analysis reveals individual burdens and mineral levels to direct efforts. Once learned and employed these practices become habitual lifestyle elements. Awareness must come first; zx4.bc9.myftpupload.com/forum-comments

Reply | Mark as Spam | Posted On 2/23/2022 8:06:49 AM

Like Dislike

Leahoz

Joined On 2/2/2020 9:55:19 AM

Add as Friend | Send Message

Almond, I love your comments, you can't detox on 'tap water' Read, Dr. F. Batmanghelidj MD, 'Yours bodies many cries for water'.

Reply | Mark as Spam | Posted On 2/23/2022 1:05:28 AM

Like Dislike

---

lim4293

Joined On 5/30/2021 9:17:29 PM

Add as Friend | Send Message

Thanks for the information but you omit some important details. The largest destroyer of the environment, period, is animal agriculture. Millions of acres of rainforests have been cut down to grow soy to feed cattle. The worldwide runoff of billions of tons from animal wastes is killing the soil, and all sources of water and creating dead zones in oceans. The pollution from this industry includes the massive amounts of antibiotics forced on animals, plus the drugs also given to them. Animal hormones are leeching into the soil and water sources. Billions of gallons of drinkable water is used in the animal ag industry in multiple ways. A major reason for water shortages in California is the agriculture industry, particularly animal agriculture and the water it takes to raise and slaughter animals.

The "solution" is not switching to pastured animals eaten. Even "pastured" cows and cattle, and chickens can easily contaminate all sources of water with the billions of pounds of their urine and excrement. Cattle are known to dump their wastes which leech into streams and rivers. 95% of all Pastured chickens and pigs are fed conventional soy and corn which the growing of also contaminates water sources with pollutants. The solution is to turn away from seeing and eating dead animals as food, and embrace a larger whole food organic plant-based human population. Cheers.

Reply | Mark as Spam | Posted On 2/23/2022 7:12:50 AM

Like Dislike

Tjg6728

Joined On 2/27/2021 6:09:21 AM

Add as Friend | Send Message

I highly recommend www.clearlyfiltered.com Full line up of filtering systems: shower head, under sink, refrigerator, pitchers, water bottle for travel

Reply | Mark as Spam | Posted On 2/23/2022 8:01:51 AM

Like Dislike

Mr.Charlie

Joined On 9/19/2021 9:14:00 AM

Add as Friend | Send Message

Best water filter? Berkeley? Reverse osmosis?

Reply | Mark as Spam | Posted On 2/23/2022 7:38:48 AM

Like Dislike

Post your comment

Previous Article Next Article

Join the World's #1 Natural Health Newsletter for FREE!
Latest Trustworthy News from Dr. Mercola — delivered straight to your inbox!

Enter your email address Subscribe Now!

Disclaimer: The entire contents of this website are based upon the opinions of Dr. Mercola, unless otherwise noted. Individual articles are based upon the opinions of the respective author, who retains copyright as marked. The information on this website is not intended to replace a one-on-one relationship with a qualified health care professional and is not intended as medical advice. It is intended as a sharing of knowledge and information from the research and experience of Dr. Mercola and his community. Dr. Mercola encourages you to make your own health care decisions based upon your research and in partnership with a qualified health care professional. If you are pregnant, nursing, taking medication, or have a medical condition, consult your health care professional before using products based on this content.

If you want to use an article on your site please click here. This content may be copied in full, with copyright, contact, creation and information intact, without specific permission, when used only in a not-for-profit format. If any other use is desired, permission in writing from Dr. Mercola is required.

Terms & Conditions • Updated Privacy Policy
© 1997-2022 Dr. Joseph Mercola. All Rights Reserved.