

Think twice before drinking that bottle of water

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Not only is bottled water detrimental to the environment, but it also has potentially harmful effects on human health. Tap water, on the other hand, is significantly better for the environment and is not likely to cause harm to human health. For instance, the production of bottled water takes up an immense amount of energy.

This is expended energy that can be easily conserved simply by drinking tap water. Furthermore, bottled water is costly and hazardous to our health.

Moreover, people are paying an exorbitant amount of money (around \$100 billion yearly globally according to National Geographic) for water that has been found to contain traces of various untested industrial chemicals such as DEHA and BBP. Worse yet, people are consuming these untested chemicals. Each year the United States goes through about 50 billion water bottles, and the majority are not recycled. This means that a large amount of plastic from consumed water bottles unnecessarily pollutes the environment when plastic is thrown away, and ultimately ends up dumped in a landfill.

Alternatively, energy is wasted if the water bottles end up in an incinerator.

However, even the water bottles that are recycled initially are still detrimental to the environment because the recycling of these plastic bottles is a waste of energy. The waste of energy, and pollution that result from plastic water bottle consumption, is completely avoidable. The simple solution is tap water. The production of bottled water takes up a tremendous amount of energy.

For instance, transportation and cooling of the water bottles burns fossil fuels. About seventeen million barrels of oil are wastefully used. In turn, the

fossil fuels produce greenhouse gasses. Tap water, however, requires neither the cost nor the energy used for making and transporting water bottles. In addition, according to the Sierra Club, “ groundwater pumping by bottled-water companies draws heavily on underground aquifers and harms watersheds.” This additional harmful environmental result of bottled water powerfully emphasizes that tap water is the right choice for the environment.

Not only is bottled water detrimental to the environment, but it can potentially be hazardous to our health. Unlike tap water, bottled water does not contain any chlorine which helps to kill bacteria that infects water. This means that bottled water can more easily store bacteria once opened or during storage. Overall, bottled water is less regulated, despite the pricing of bottled water in comparison to cost-free yet more regulated tap water. Also, the government does not have as much power in monitoring its level of safeness.

This is because the big corporations that own the water bottle companies have more say so in the regulations enforced. However, the water bottle corporations tend to be more concerned with efficiently producing the product and selling as much of it as possible, than they are with the safeness of the water they are producing. An example of this corporate lack of concern or regard for safety is clearly shown by the lack of strict restrictions and guidelines on the number of contaminants that can be found in bottled water (according to the National Resources Defense Council). On the contrary, tap water is well regulated in the United States by the Environmental Protection Agency. Unlike bottled water, tap water’s

limitations on the number of contaminants it contains are not lax. In fact the restrictions on the number of contaminants found is strict.

Chlorine, an added disinfectant, kills bacteria in the water. Bottled water, however, lacks chlorine, making the water much more susceptible to bacteria. One consequence of consuming water from plastic bottles instead of tap water is exposure to Bisphenol A, or BPA, a chemical contained in plastic. BPA can leach from the plastic into the water people consume. However BPA has been found to have concerning effects on people.

According to health.usnews.com, “ BPA...

appears to mimic the effects of estrogen, interfering with hormone levels and cell signaling systems.” Even more disconcerting perhaps is that “ Previous studies have shown that people exposed to high levels of BPA have a greater risk of developing uterine fibroids, breast cancer, decreased sperm counts, and prostate cancer.” Moreover water is essential to life and plays a significant role in the environment. Therefore, it is extremely important that we are conscientious of the methods by which we consume, package and extract it, and are aware of the methods which are the best. Many people are under the impression that bottled water is cleaner or safer to drink due to the media portraying it that way, as well as other factors that contribute to this misinformation.

But it is time to break this misconception. From tap water being well regulated, to less pollution and energy being wasted, tap water has undeniably proven to be both a healthier and more socially responsible

choice. Furthermore, use of tap water would be a big step in the right direction pertaining the protection of the environment as well.