

EWG's Guide to Safe Drinking Water

Drinking plenty of good, clean water is important for a healthy body. Read EWG researchers' top tips to learn how to stay hydrated while reducing your exposures to common drinking water pollutants.

The only way to remove hexavalent chromium from tap water is with reverse osmosis filtration. These filtration systems are not inexpensive, but with proper maintenance they can last at least a decade, bringing the cost down to as little as \$5 per month. Like tap water, there's no legal limit for chromium-6 in bottled water, so there's no guarantee that it's free of this contaminant.

Tap Water: Learn what's in it.

Tap water suppliers publish all their water quality tests. Bottled water companies don't. Read your annual tap water quality report. Look up your city's water in EWG's National Tap Water Atlas (www.ewg.org/tap-water). (Private well? Get it tested.)



Filtered Tap Water: Drink it, cook with it.

- Choose a filter certified to remove contaminants found in your water: (www.ewg.org/tap-water/getwaterfilter) Effectiveness varies - read the fine print.
- Carbon filters (pitcher or tap-mounted) are affordable and reduce many common water contaminants, like lead and byproducts of the disinfection process used to treat municipal tap water.
- Install a reverse osmosis filter if you can afford it, to remove contaminants that carbon filters can't eliminate, like arsenic and perchlorate (rocket fuel).

Filters: Change them.

Change your water filters on time. Old filters aren't safe – they harbor bacteria and let contaminants through.

Bottled Water: Drink filtered tap water instead.

You can read the bottle label and still not know whether the water is pure and natural or just processed tap water. EWG found 38 contaminants in 10 popular brands.

On the Go: Carry water in safe containers.

Hard plastic bottles (#7 plastic) can leach a harmful plastics chemical called bisphenol-A (BPA) into water. Carry stainless steel or other BPA-free bottles. Don't reuse bottled water bottles. The plastic can harbor bacteria and break down to release plastics chemicals.

While Pregnant: Stay hydrated with safe water.

It's especially important for women to drink plenty of water during pregnancy. Follow all the tips above and take your doctor's advice on how much to drink.

Infants: Use safe water for formula.

Use filtered tap water for your baby's formula. If your water is not fluoridated, you can use a carbon filter. If it is, use a reverse osmosis filter to remove the fluoride, because fluoridated water can damage an infant's developing teeth. If you choose bottled water for your infant, make sure it's fluoride-free. Learn more at www.ewg.org/babysafe.

Breathe Easy: Use a whole house water filter.

For extra protection, a whole house carbon filter will remove contaminants from steamy vapors you and your family inhale while showering and washing dishes. Effectiveness varies widely – call the manufacturer for details.

