

## Plastic Bottled Water...

### *To Drink Or Not To Drink?*

Plastic Bottled water is everywhere! We are drinking more plastic bottled water than ever before. This may be due to convenience, health habits, or a more active and mobile lifestyle. With hot weather around the corner, and the potential for increased outdoor activities, we are likely to be consuming even more bottled water for on-the-go convenience.

But we've heard all the rumors... are plastic bottles safe for transporting our water?

There is no doubt that plastic bottles are the most popular and convenient, but they are also the most potentially dangerous to our health and environment. Current research is showing that plastic has the potential to leach harmful chemicals into our water. So how can we minimize our risks?

If you are consuming plastic bottled water, it is important to realize that all plastics are not created equally.

To ensure that you have the safest plastic bottle possible, follow this simple process:

On the bottom of each plastic bottle there is a recycling number in a triangle. This number indicates the safety factor of each bottle. The numbers range from 1-7.

*Numbers 1, 2, 4 and 5 are relatively safe. Number 1 in particular, has been shown to be the safest and the most easily recycled.*

*Number 3, 6 and 7 however, are considered to be harmful plastics. These particular plastics can leach harmful compounds that can disrupt our natural hormone balance and may promote cancer. Number 7 is most commonly used in jugs and re-usable sport bottles. This particular number contains the controversial substance bisphenol-A, a compound which can mimic naturally occurring estrogen in our bodies. Bisphenol-A has been found to disrupt hormone balance and may promote cancer.*

Here are some additional tips to minimize your risks from plastic water bottles:

- Disposable plastic bottled water is created for one time use only. The more times you reuse the same bottle, the more you increase your risk of exposure to harmful chemicals and bacteria.
- Smell the water first. If it smells at all like plastic, don't drink it!

- Check for the date that your water was bottled. If bottled water has been sitting in its container for more than a couple of months, buy a different one.
- Keep your bottled water away from heat. Any heat exposure of any kind will increase the leaching of chemicals from the plastic. Therefore, never let your plastic bottles sit in your car on a warm day or over night.
- Avoid the use of plastic containers for warm or hot beverages.

So besides transporting our water in plastic containers, what are other safer options?

In reality, the best way to transport your water is in a clear glass or ceramic bottle. However, this may not be the most realistic method since glass tends to be heavy and breakable.

The next best choice is a stainless steel container that contains no plastic liners.

With all that being said, a stainless steel water bottle is recommended for times when you are “on the go”, while a regular glass cup is recommended for times when you are at home or in the office.

A great alternative to disposable bottled water is the use of filtered water in your portable non-plastic water bottle. This will decrease your risk of harmful chemical exposure and help our environment by decreasing our landfill waste.

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