

**BOTTLED WATER
IN YOUR CAR
IS VERY DANGEROUS!**



MUST SHARE!

Why **BPA-FREE**
PLASTIC May
NOT Be As
SAFE As You Think



What's the Problem with Plastic Bottles?



You may have read what's bad about plastic bags and decided to reduce the amount of disposables you consume, and that's a great direction to be heading in. But there's another problem in the plastic-trash minefield that needs tackling – in the U.S., 1,500 plastic water bottles are consumed *every second*. Here's why that's a major problem for humans, the environment, and the animals on our planet.

The Human Impact

Plastic bottles contain Bisphenol A (BPA), the chemical used to make the plastic hard and clear. BPA is an endocrine disruptor which has been proven to be hazardous to human health. It has been strongly linked to a host of health problems including certain types of cancer, neurological difficulties, early puberty in girls, reduced fertility in women, premature labour, and defects in newborn babies - to name a few examples. BPA enters the human body through exposure to plastics such as bottled drinks and cleaning products. It has been found in significant amounts in at-risk groups such as pregnant women's placentas and growing fetuses. A study conducted last year found that 96% of women in the U.S have BPA in their bodies.

The good news is that you can have your BPA levels measured and make lifestyle changes to lower them, as demonstrated by Jeb Berrier in his film about plastic consumer merchandise, Bag It.

Bottled drinks also contain phthalates, which are commonly used in the U.S. to make plastics such as polyvinyl chloride (PVC) more flexible. Phthalates are also endocrine-disrupting chemicals that have been linked to a wide range of developmental and reproductive effects, including reduced sperm count, testicular abnormality and tumors, and gender development issues. The FDA does not regulate phthalates or class them as a health hazard due to the supposedly minute amounts present in plastic bottles. This decision does not take into account the significant presence of plastics in the average American citizen's daily life, the fact that phthalate concentration increases the longer a plastic water bottle is stored, or the fact that a bottled drink that is exposed to heat causes accelerated leaching of harmful plastic chemicals into the drink.

In addition to the negative impacts of BPA and phthalates on human health there are also growing concerns regarding carcinogens and microbial contaminants that have been found in test samples of bottled water.

Bottling plants also cause problems for the humans who live near them. Water extraction surrounding bottling plants involved millions of gallons of water to make the bottles. This often leads to local water shortages that affects nearby residents, especially farmers who need to provide food for the surrounding neighborhoods.

The Animal Impact

Plastic bottle tops are currently not recyclable, and as with plastic bags they often end up at the bottom of the ocean, and in the stomachs of a variety of animal species that mistake them for food. One albatross that was recently found dead on a Hawaiian island had a stomach full of 119 bottle caps.

Marine life falls prey to this problem on a daily basis. A sperm whale was found dead on a North American beach recently with a plastic gallon bottle which had gummed up its small intestine. The animal's body was full of plastic material including other plastic bottles, bottle caps and plastic bags.

The Environmental Impact

Plastic bottles are made from a petroleum product known as polyethylene terephthalate (PET), and they require huge amounts of fossil fuels to both make and transport them. In the 1970s the U.S. was the world's largest exporter of oil, but now it is the largest importer. If you fill a plastic bottle with liquid so that it is 25% full, that's roughly how much oil it took to make the bottle. For a single-use disposable item, *that's a lot*.

It's harder to recycle plastic bottles than you think. Of the mass numbers of plastic bottles consumed throughout the world, most of them are not recycled because only certain types of plastic bottles can be recycled by certain municipalities. They either end up lying stagnant in landfills, leaching dangerous chemicals into the ground, or they infiltrate our streets as litter. They are found on sidewalks, in parks, front yards and rivers, and even if you chop them into tiny pieces they still take more than a human lifetime to decompose.

It gets worse. In the case of bottled water, the plastic-making process requires over two gallons of water for the purification process of every gallon of water.

In the U.S., bottled water and tap water are regulated by different federal agencies. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulates bottled water and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulates tap water. Therefore, the enforcement and monitoring of water quality for bottled water vs tap water does not add up. Due to strict EPA policies, incidents of tap water contamination have to be reported immediately to U.S. citizens, however there is no such rule for bottled water, despite numerous bottled water recalls taking place over the years.

Who's to Blame?

The U.S. is the largest consumer market for bottled water in the world, followed by Mexico, Brazil, and China.


Bottled water companies and beverage producers work together to turn huge profits. Manufacturers of bottled water advertise their products as being of higher quality, purer and safer than tap water, despite the fact that tap water is actually held to more stringent quality standards than bottled water. Some brands of bottled water have been found to be tap water in disguise.

Although several scientific studies have been done into the problems of chemicals found in bottled drinks, there have been various campaigns to undermine the results of the research. The American Chemical Council (ACC) still claims that BPA is safe.

So Who's Doing What?

In Germany bottle recycling is a common-practice and efficient process across the country. Machines or staff members in stores across take used bottles from customers in exchange for cash payments. Recycling rates are therefore consistently high and companies are encouraged to reuse the bottles. Some 'new' bottles have indents on them to indicate the number of times they have been reused. Other German towns such as Neustadt an der Weinstrasse prefer to tackle the root of the problem by providing further cash incentives to reduce household waste in the first place.

In 2009 in Australia, the New South Wales town of Bundanoon voted to ban bottled water out of concern for the environment and the health of the local community. Selling or dispensing bottled water within the town precinct became prohibited, and drinking fountains and filtered water dispensers became common features of the town instead.



In 2010 Canada became the first country to declare BPA a toxic substance, with the European Union closely following by banning BPA from baby bottles in 2011. The United States, France, Germany, Denmark and Sweden have taken some steps to limit the use of BPA in products.

In order to reduce litter in the natural wonder earlier this year the Grand Canyon National Park Service approved a plan to halt the sale of bottled water within 30 days. Water stations are available at the park for visitors to refill their own water bottles.

What Can We Do About It?

Reduce

Avoid the need for bottled drinks altogether. You can save resources by drinking from glasses or water fountains whenever possible when you are out.

Do the research. Don't fall for advertising that tells you that bottled water is purer or safer than tap. If you are concerned about your tap water you can obtain a water quality report for your area and buy a water filter if necessary.

Reuse

Invest in a BPA-free reusable bottle. Carry a refillable, BPA-free bottle when you are on the go, and refill it whenever the option arises. This guide looks at some of the options on the market.

Recycle

Efficiently. Work out which plastics your municipality recycles and sort them accordingly.

But above all, ***reduce.*** Think of the whales and albatrosses and buy fewer plastic products in general, particularly when you know that you are unable to recycle them. It will probably have a much larger and positive impact than you think.

Ban the Bottle



Mentes Imundas e Belas









**Concord, Massachusetts just became
the first US city to ban
single-use plastic water bottles!**



Imagen: Matei own work and property

