

## **Bottled Water vs. Tap Water**

From the International Bottled Water Association

<http://www.bottledwater.org/health/bottled-water-vs-tap-water>

“Most people who drink bottled water also drink tap water, depending on the circumstances.”

Drinking water—tap, filtered, or bottled—is important for healthy hydration and plays a vital role in people’s lives. Consumers choose bottled water for several reasons, including taste, quality, and convenience.

Bottled water is also an alternative to less-healthy sugary packaged beverages when consumers want to limit calories, caffeine, sugar, artificial flavors or colors, alcohol, and other ingredients from their diets.

### **Support For Public Water Systems**

Contrary to what you might hear, the bottled water industry supports a strong public water system which is important for providing citizens with clean and safe drinking water. In fact, many bottled water companies use public water sources for their products. Once the water enters the bottled water plant, several processes are employed to ensure that it meets the purified standard of the U.S. Pharmacopeia 23rd Revision. These treatments can include utilizing a multi-barrier approach. Measures in a multi-barrier approach may include one or more of the following: reverse osmosis, distillation, micro-filtration, carbon filtration, ozonation, and ultraviolet (UV) light. The finished water product is then placed in a bottle under sanitary conditions and sold to the consumer.

Moreover, the water from public water systems is often compromised after emergency situations or natural disasters (e.g., hurricanes, floods, tornados, fires, or boil alerts). During these times, bottled water is a necessary and reliable alternative to deliver clean, safe drinking water. However, tap water does provide in most cases a safe source of drinking water, even if occasional system failures make it necessary for consumers to search for alternatives during these times.

### **Get the Facts**

The 2011 Drinking Water Research Foundation (DWRF) report “Bottled Water and Tap Water: Just the Facts” provides a detailed comparison of quality and monitoring regulations for tap water and bottled water.

DIFFERENCES IN THE REGULATION OF TAP WATER AND BOTTLED WATER, THOUGH MINIMAL, HIGHLIGHT THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DRINKING WATER DELIVERED BY A PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM AND DRINKING WATER DELIVERED TO THE CONSUMER IN A SEALED CONTAINER.

- **Public water systems (tap water)** provide quality water for human consumption and other uses (e.g., washing clothes, bathing, and industrial and commercial uses) through a piped distribution system to specific communities. Public water systems are granted exclusive rights to provide water to consumers in a particular geographic or municipal area. Consumers do not, therefore, have a choice of which public water system will provide water to their homes or businesses.

- **Bottled water** is a packaged food product sold in individual, sanitary, sealed containers. It is intended solely for human consumption. Consumers have a variety of bottled water choices available to satisfy their particular tastes and price preferences. It is sold in many different package sizes, including 3- and 5-gallon containers used in bottled water coolers, 2.5-gallon refrigerator-size containers, and “on-the go” half-liter, one-liter, and 1.5 liter convenience-size packages. Consumers choose bottled water for several reasons: taste, quality, and convenience.