

WATER FACTS & FANCIES

Tap Water, Pure Water Not Always the Same

(NAPSA)—Here's news about efforts to keep water clean that many may find easy to swallow.

Water can contact—and then carry—many different substances, including gases, minerals and organic matter, in its passage from pure mountain springs to your faucet. These can interfere with the appearance, taste and odor of your tap water.

The Problem

Something is floating in the water. More than likely it is simply dirt or other materials suspended in water. Officially it's known as "turbidity." Unofficially as "floaties." It is caused by dirt and sand getting into wells and by runoff of other organic matter into water supplies. Not only is it visually unpleasant but turbidity can also cause problems with plumbing systems, sinks, fixtures and the cleanliness of your laundry.

Organic materials in water may not only contribute to turbidity, but may also produce unpleasant tastes or odors. Even when the amount of organic matter is very low, off tastes and musty odors may be detected. These tastes and odors affect drinking water, as well as the foods and beverages prepared with the water. However, organic materials usually do not cause health problems in the home.

At moderate levels, the minerals dissolved in water can add an



WATER WATER EVERYWHERE: whether you can drink it may depend on how well you filter out contaminants.

unpleasant taste to water. A high mineral content gives the water a salty or soda taste and interferes with the flavor of food and beverages.

Odor in water is often caused by the presence of hydrogen sulfide gas. So-called sulfur water not only produces an obnoxious rotten egg odor, it is corrosive to plumbing metals and causes rapid tarnishing of silver.

The Solution

Only one-half to one percent of all the water supplied in a typical community is used for drinking and cooking. Therefore, water can be improved at the point of use. There are several ways to treat water. The method you select will depend on your individual water needs and the quality of your water. Start by

having your water analyzed. Options include the Department of Health, a private laboratory or a reputable water treatment dealership.

The two most common methods of treating water for drinking are reverse osmosis and carbon filtration.

Reverse Osmosis

In reverse osmosis (RO), water is separated from the dissolved minerals by forcing it through a semi-permeable membrane, which could be visualized as a screen with microscopic openings. The treated water passes through the membrane, and the impurities are left behind.

Carbon Filters

Activated carbon is typically used to "polish" water, removing unpleasant taste and odor and certain hazardous organic chemicals. It does not, however, remove inorganic chemicals or bacteria. The tiny activated carbon particles attract water contaminants, which stick to the carbon surfaces. Most often, carbon filters are used in conjunction with other water treatment methods.

Free Information

To learn more about water impurities, water analyzing options or methods of treating water, go to www.ecowater.com. EcoWater Systems Inc. is the world's largest manufacturer of residential water treatment systems.